The aftermath of sexual assault by a stranger: The spouse's reaction as a factor in the woman's recovery.

Karri Lee. Michaelis
University of Windsor

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THE AFTERMATH
OF SEXUAL ASSAULT
BY A STRANGER:
THE SPOUSE'S REACTION
AS A FACTOR IN THE WOMAN'S RECOVERY

by
Karri Lee Michaelis

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1993
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ABSTRACT

THE AFTERMATH OF SEXUAL ASSAULT BY A STRANGER:
THE SPOUSE’S REACTION AS A FACTOR IN THE WOMAN’S RECOVERY
by
Karri Lee Michaelis

This exploratory study examines the recovery process from sexual assault for a married woman using the combined theories of the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism and liberal feminism. The results of this study are based on the experiences of five married couples.

The specific focus of this research study is: To what extent do the husband’s reactions to his wife being sexually assaulted, help or hinder her recovery from the assault? As such, the primary goals within this examination are: First, to discover what the marriage relationship was like prior to the sexual assault; second, to articulate both the husband’s and the wife’s verbal and behavioral reactions to the sexual assault (specifically, a stranger sexual assault) and to each other; and third, to discover how, if at all, the husband’s reactions affect his partner’s recovery from the assault. These goals are attained through guided, open-ended interviews with participants in the absence of their spouses.

It is hoped that this study will not only provide the basis for further Canadian research in this area, but will help promote a more humanistic response towards indirect victims and a more holistic approach towards direct victims of sexual assault.
DEDICATION

To the victims

and

to the crisis centres who help them
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of several individuals. First, I would like to thank my committee members: Dr. Vincent, my advisor, for his expertise and his unshakeable belief in the topic; Dr Shuraydi for his guidance and foresight; and Dr. Daly for his many helpful comments.

I am deeply indebted to each one of my participants for allowing me the privilege to talk with them on such an intimate and private level. I am both humbled and inspired by the bravery they have shown me in facing their fears, and in their unfailing belief that life can and does go on.

I have benefitted immeasurably from discussions with Peggy Burgess, Susan Shannon James and Dr. Janice Drakich.

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INTRODUCTION

Sunny afternoon
chase away my blues
start me thinking
of the times
I spent with you
Summer days
the midnight waves...
I'M GOING TO RAPE YOU
In the ally (sic) by the store
I'll be waiting at the door
I'M GOING TO RAPE YOU
turn you into a little whore
when I'm done you'll beg for more
I'M GOING TO...
I'M GOING TO RAPE YOUR BODY...YOUR MIND...
YOUR SOUL
No one will claim they knew ya
even your husband (emphasis mine)
I'M GOING TO RAPE YOU
This was found, unsigned and pasted
on a storefront. (Scully, 1990:33)

A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Although the fate of becoming a sexual assault victim
can befall either sex, it is incontrovertible that females are
the most frequent sufferers, and that men are their
victimizers. The actual prevalence of sexual assault often
varies statistically.¹ Sources (Sexual Assault Crisis Centre,
1988; Ellis, 1988) maintain that only about one out of ten
sexual assaults are reported to the police. If this figure is
reliable, then the 1988 Canadian Centre for Justice
Statistics' figure of 29,111 sexual assaults reported to the

¹As Kilpatrick, Veronen and Best (1985:115) explain, "the
majority of rape victims do not report to police, receive medical
care from hospitals, or seek help from rape crisis centers or other
victim service agencies."
police, could actually be as high as 291,110 (Department of Justice Canada, 1991:11). Another source predicts that by the age 21, one out of every two females will become a sexual assault victim (compared to one in three males), and that every seventeen minutes a sexual assault involving intercourse occurs. (Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, 1988).

On a different note, Brownmiller (1976:203-204) indicates that surveys conducted in Philadelphia, Washington, and Toronto have revealed that thirty to fifty percent of sexual assaults, to women, involve more than one male attacker. Moreover, with respect to sexual assault types, although the likelihood of a sexual assault being committed by an acquaintance is higher then by a stranger,\(^2\) Karmen (1984:115) points out that reports of stranger sexual assaults have been as high as 72% in the United States (1980 statistics). In contrast, Canadian statistics suggest that under 50 percent of sexual assaults are committed by those unknown to the victim (Sexual Assault Crisis Centre, 1988).

**Husbands: The Forgotten Victims**

When one examines the statistics, it is hardly surprising that much of the current research surrounding sexual assault victims revolves around women and the horror that they go through. This research has not only helped fill

---

\(^2\)A stranger is defined as "someone not known to the victim, or known only by sight. Everyone else can be considered an acquaintance" (Karmen, 1984:114).
a void in the area of sexual assault literature, but has aided sexual assault crisis centres (hereafter to be referred to as crisis centres) in correctly placing the woman in the position of primary victim. As Dr. Elaine Hilberman explains:

Rape is "the ultimate violation of the self" short of homicide and is best understood in the context of a crime against the person and not against the hymen. Rape is an act of violence and humiliation in which the victim experiences overwhelming fear for her very existence as well as a profound sense of powerlessness and helplessness which few other events in one's life can parallel. (Hilberman, 1976: 436)

Hence, it has become well recognized that the woman, being the "direct" victim of a sexual assault, should have access to immediate and continuous support to aid in her recovery.

However, what some Canadian crisis centres have failed to acknowledge is that there are also "indirect" victims of a sexual assault who need attention, not only to help them deal

---

3When Holmstrom and Burgess began their research in the 1970's, "little existed in the scholarly literature on rape victims. The scholarly and professional literature on sexual offenses, including rape, was voluminous, but it had overlooked the victim" (1978:6).

"Prior to 1983 in Canada, "rape" was the legal term used to describe unwanted sexual intercourse. Since then it has been replaced by the concept of "sexual assault," one that not only adopted the old definition of rape, but included less severe forms of sexual contact. Unfortunately, current Canadian literature on the topic continues to use the two terms interchangeably. This persistence has undoubtedly added to the confusion over what the appropriate terminology should be. Adding to this confusion is the fact that "rape" is still the acknowledged label for forced intercourse in the United States. Hence, except when quoting, every attempt has been made throughout this paper to use the term sexual assault because it not only properly shifts the emphasis away from the sex and concentrates on the violence, it also conforms to Canadian Criminal Code terminology.
with their own emotional turmoil, but to help the woman deal with her's. Perhaps the most notable indirect victim is her husband. The feelings he may be experiencing, of rage, shame and helplessness, are sometimes callously disregarded by crisis centres who have adapted approaches too narrow to fully meet the primary victim's needs. For example, a Canadian talk show host who recently conducted a segment on "Husbands of Rape Victims" in Toronto, relates her experience:

In doing this program there were some rape crisis centres we contacted. We wanted input from them. And they criticized us for doing the program. Some said that it's about time and others said, "You know we have to focus on the real victims. And the men aren't the victims in all of this. So what are you wasting your time doing an entire hour on the husbands and boyfriends of rape victims?" (CTV Television Network, 1992: 14)

Due to the close bonds that exist between a married couple, however, several sources (Rodkin, Hunt and Dunstan Cowan, 1982; Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979; McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979; Crenshaw, 1978; Silverman, 1978) insist that how the husband responds and interacts with his partner, following her sexual assault, could either facilitate or inhibit her rehabilitation from it. The seriousness of the situation is underlined by both Elias (1986:117) and Crenshaw (1978:51), who estimate that between 50 and 80 percent of

"Relations between a victim and her family (other than husband) decline in only one case in seven. Often they improve. The marriage relationship ... nearly always has a negative impact on the adjustment process" (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:46).
relationships break up following the woman’s sexual assault. It is for this reason that the aftermath of sexual assault for a couple requires research attention.

**RESEARCH PURPOSE**

This study examined the process of recovery from sexual assault for a married woman. Specifically, the question upon which this research rests was: To what extent do the husband’s reactions to his wife being sexually assaulted, help or hinder her recovery from the assault? In order to answer this question, the primary goals within this examination were: First, to discover what the marriage relationship was like prior to the sexual assault; second, to articulate both the husband’s and the wife’s verbal and behavioral reactions to the sexual assault⁶ (specifically, a stranger sexual assault) and to each other; and third, to discover how, if at all, the husband’s reactions affected his partner’s recovery from the assault.

This was an exploratory study involving a small number of couples (n=5). As such, it is unlikely that their attitudes reflected those of all similarly affected couples. On the other hand, the researcher was more concerned with exploring the attitudes, feelings and perceptions of husbands and wives, than with ensuring that the selected sample was inferentially

⁶Throughout the remainder of this paper, unless stated otherwise, sexual assault connotes forced intercourse.
sound. In addition, since questionnaires were retrospective in nature, the results of this study must remain tentative.

Private interviews were conducted between the researcher and each partner in the absence of the individual's spouse. Through the use of guided, open-ended interviews with spouses of sexual assault victims, one can gain an understanding of what each of the husband's reactions and interactions with his partner symbolize. Similarly, through interviews with sexual assault victims, one may come to understand how each woman interprets her husband's reactions and how these reactions affect her recovery from the sexual assault. Due to the nature of this study which focuses on such concepts as sex-role socialization, gender acquisition, attitudes, perceptions, social action, and power, the combined theories of the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism and liberal feminism were used to organize and analyze data from the interviews.

POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

To date, this research topic has generated little interest in Canada. It is perhaps for this reason that the current situation exists. That is, although direct victims of sexual assault are encouraged to seek the aid of government funded crisis centres, indirect victims (i.e. husbands) are
discouraged from doing so.\textsuperscript{7} If a husband requires professional support, not only to help deal with his own emotional turmoil, but to help his wife deal with her’s, he may have to seek out costly therapy.\textsuperscript{8} Ironically, if the couple can not afford professional help, any headway made by a crisis centre towards helping the woman recover could be inadvertently undermined by her husband. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will not only provide the basis for further Canadian research in this area, but will help promote a more humanistic response towards indirect victims and a more holistic approach towards direct victims of sexual assault.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{7}As Michael Byrn, Program Supervisor for the Ministry of Community and Social Services in Windsor, Ontario states: "I don't think that the sexual assault crisis centres are the bad guys in all of this. I think the resources that are available are fairly limited." He added that it was only one to two years ago that the crisis centres began receiving funding from the Solicitor General. Prior to that time, crisis centres were run mostly by volunteers because funding to hire professionals was unavailable (Byrn, 1992).

\textsuperscript{8}In a telephone interview with Edwin Clarke, Supervisor for the Family Counselling Centre in Windsor, Ontario, Mr. Clarke stated that he knew of no Ontario programs aimed, specifically, at helping the significant others of sexual assault victims. He claimed that although a Family Counselling Centre would help a husband in crisis over his wife’s sexual assault, the service was not free. Clients pay according to their incomes. Furthermore, Mr. Clarke added that unless a case worker (possessing no less than a Master's Degree) believed the husband to be in an immediate crisis, the husband would have to fill out an application form, mail it, and then would have an appointment set up for him within two weeks. Each appointment is one hour long (Clarke, 1992).

\textsuperscript{9}In fact, information from this study will be utilized in sessions by Peggy Burgess, Director of the newly conceived "Significant Others Group" in Detroit Michigan.
LITERATURE REVIEW

As a recognized social issue, sexual assaults have recently received a great deal of publicity. Between popular magazines, news programmes, and television talk shows, people are becoming increasingly aware that sexual assault is not only a problem in their nations, but in their own communities. However, sexual assaults have not always received the media’s attention nor, by inference, the public’s attention. As Mary Ann Largen states, "although Germaine Greer had scored a first on network television in 1971 when she interviewed a rape victim on ABC TV, historically rape had been viewed as a taboo subject" (Largen, 1976:70).10

In addition to the media, the past twenty years have witnessed a copius amount of literature written on sexual assault by clinicians and researchers. Given the time and space allowance in this paper, however, a total review of the literature would not only be unrealistic, but unnecessary for our purposes. Subsequently, only a select review of the literature will be conducted.

This chapter is divided into four sections: "The Canadian

10This change in trend can largely be attributed to the "rape crisis centre movement" (Koss and Harvey, 1991:127), a movement born out of the consciousness-raising sessions of the 1960’s. According to Largen, it took these consciousness-raising sessions for women to realize the epidemic nature of sexual assault (Largen, 1976:69). During the 1970’s, a growing number of feminists formed protest groups and initiated public speak outs on sexual assault to stir up social awareness and support for community based crisis centres (Largen, 1976:69). Canada’s first crisis centres were established in 1974 in Vancouver and Toronto (Welch, 1979:1).
Sexual Assault Law," "Types of Sexual Assault," "The Aftermath of Sexual Assault for the Woman," and "The Husband's Reactions and How They Can Affect His Spouse's Recovery." The first section addresses the definition of sexual assault within the context of the law.

THE CANADIAN SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW

In Canada, on 4 January, 1983, the old and anachronistic law, with its legal categories of rape, attempted rape and indecent assault, was replaced by three levels of sexual assault, each level reflecting a different degree of violence. According to Rodrigues (1993:181), the three classifications of sexual assault are: "Sexual assault," an indictable offence that carries a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment (s.271); "sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm," carrying with it a maximum sentence of fourteen years (s.272); and "aggravated sexual assault" that carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment (s.273).

Despite the legal definition of sexual assault as "any unwanted act of a sexual nature, including rape and any other unwanted fondling or touching" (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1988:2), Parliament has laid down no formal guidelines as to what constitutes a "sexual" nature (Gunn and Minch, 1988:105; Boyle, 1984:72). Consequently, the task of defining a sexual assault, as opposed to a nonsexual assault, has fallen to the
courts - a reality that has proved disappointing for many (Ellis, 1988:20). By way of explanation, although the courts have agreed that a sexual assault conviction may be ascertained when the victim's primary sexual organs or genitalia are involved, the courts remain undecided as to whether a conviction may be ascertained when the victim's secondary organs or genitalia are involved" (Gunn and Minch, 1988:104-105).

On a more positive note, however, some writers (Gunn and Minch, 1988; Ellis, 1988; Boyle, 1984) suggest that, unlike the previous law of rape, the new law of sexual assault properly recognizes that forcibly subjecting a person to sexual contact is an act of violence and domination. Sex is simply the method employed in order to show this domination, and subsequently, to obtain a sense of power.

The next section attempts to familiarize readers with some of the characteristics of sexual assaults. Particular attention need be drawn to the concepts hereinafter as many are utilized in later chapters.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Throughout the literature, various types of sexual assault are depicted. In their account, Koss and Harvey

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"Examples of secondary organs or genitalia include thighs, stomach and breasts. However, with respect to breasts, "in October 1987 the Supreme Court of Canada clarified the legislation by stating that the touching of breasts was indeed sexual, and therefore constituted a sexual assault" (Gunn and Minch, 1988:105)."
(1991) document as many as 14 variations of sexual assault, each variation a result of one of four sexual assault characteristics. They state that sexual assaults can be characterized by "form," "interpersonal context," "spontaneity" and "the extent to which they become public knowledge (Koss and Harvey, 1991:5-6)."

FORM

The first way Koss and Harvey characterize a sexual assault is by form. Within this context, sexual assaults are defined by the combined number of actual and supporting offenders involved (1991:5). For example, whereas "individual rapes" involve one offender, "multiple rapes" involve at least three offenders (Koss and Harvey, 1991:5). This is an important characteristic since sexual assaults involving multiple offenders are often more violent and life-threatening for the victim.\(^\text{12}\)

INTERPERSONAL CONTEXT

The second way Koss and Harvey characterize a sexual assault is by interpersonal context. Interpersonal context indicates the degree of familiarity between the victim and the accoster (1991:5-6). "Stranger rapes," for instance, do not involve any familiarity between victims and offenders, whereas

\(^{12}\)For example, in her book, Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape, Susan Brownmiller (1975) describes numerous violent accounts of "gang rapes" (especially pages 29-118).
"acquaintance rapes" (such as between co-workers or neighbours) and "date rapes" (such as between friends or acquaintances) involve at least some degree of familiarity (Koss and Harvey, 1991:5-6). This distinction is significant because sexual assaults involving accosters who are known to the victim are often perceived by society as less serious or "less real" than those involving accosters who are unknown (Gunn and Minch, 1988:47). What is more, in their study of 75 victims at a Community Mental Health Centre in Winnipeg, Gunn and Minch found that the likelihood of reporting "stranger" sexual assaults (75 percent) was greater than those either by acquaintances (47 percent), friends (43 percent) or family members (25 percent) (1988:40).

SPONTANEITY

The third way Koss and Harvey characterize a sexual assault is by spontaneity. This implies that sexual assaults differ in the degree of planning undertaken by the victim’s assailant (1991:6). For example, "partially planned rapes" and "planned rapes" differ in the extent that offenders select the time, place, procedure and their victims (Koss and Harvey, 1991:6). Although the importance of this characteristic is not well acknowledged in the literature, it is possible that this sexual assault characteristic is significant because the victim’s perception of how well her assault was planned could affect the degree to which she may later blame herself for its
occurrence.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

The final way Koss and Harvey characterize a sexual assault is by the extent to which it becomes public knowledge. For example, a "hidden rape," that is also an "acknowledged rape," is one in which, despite meeting the legal requirements of a sexual assault, is not reported to the police because the victim is unfamiliar with the sexual assault law (Koss and Harvey, 1991:6). This characteristic is significant because it incorporates the victim's perception of what she believes a sexual assault to be, the outcome of which will affect her decision to whether or not report the incident to the authorities (Koss and Harvey, 1991:6).

It is important to note that a sexual assault will often incorporate many of the above-mentioned characteristics. For example, it is easy to conceive a "stranger rape" involving multiple offenders, being partially planned and remaining hidden from the police.

In contrast to Koss and Harvey (1991), Burgess and Holmstrom (1980) categorize sexual assaults according to the style of attack adopted by accosters. After a year of talking with sexual assault victims at Boston City Hospital, Burgess and Holmstrom concluded that the two main styles of attack are "the blitz rape" and "the confidence rape" (Burgess and Holmstrom 1980:27).
THE "BLITZ RAPE"

According to Burgess and Holmstrom (1980:28), a "blitz rape" is a sudden and unexpected attack on a woman in which, "from her point of view, there is no ready explanation for the man's presence." In addition, a common feature of a "blitz rape" involves the accosters remaining anonymous to the victim, either by covering his face or her's (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1980:28).

The following scenario provides an example:

In the afternoon of 28 December, 1991, the researcher was contacted by an anonymous male calling on behalf of his wife. He was responding to the advertisement in his local newspaper placed there by the researcher. He explained that his wife had been abducted by three male strangers at knife point, four months ago. She had been blindfolded and taken to a motel room where she was sexually assaulted, repeatedly, and in a variety of positions. She remained a prisoner for two days before being released.

Within this particular sexual assault, one's attention is drawn to the following set of characteristics: The sexual assault involved numerous accosters; the accosters were strangers to the victim; and the anonymities of her accosters were maintained using a blindfold. Also, due to the length of the assault and the use of a motel room, one could logically surmise that the sexual assault was planned.

THE "CONFIDENCE RAPE"

In contrast to the "blitz rape," the "confidence rape" is
a 'con' game. That is, "like the confidence man, he encourages her to trust him, and then he betrays this trust" (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1980:29).

Burgess and Holmstrom contend that although "confidence rapes" typically involve acquaintances, there are also other variations. For example, one variation of the "confidence rape" involves using other women as decoys in 'setting-up' potential victims. On the other hand, if the "confidence rape" involves a male stranger, "he will make an effort to strike up a conversation with the woman and to use verbal means to capture her rather than physical force" (1980:29-39).

The following case illustrates a "confidence rape:"

In the afternoon of 14 November, the researcher was contacted by an anonymous male caller responding to the researcher's newspaper advertisement. The caller explained that his wife had been sexually assaulted by an unknown man posing as a delivery person. The sexual assault took place in the couple's home.

Within this sexual assault scenario, one's attention is drawn to a different set of characteristics: Although the accoster was unknown to the victim, the sexual assault involved only one accoster; anonymity between the accoster and his victim was not maintained; and, the assault may or may not have been planned.

Having completed an overview of some of the more common types of sexual assault, the next section outlines the aftermath of sexual assault for a woman and explores the
possible correlation between certain types of sexual assault and the woman’s subsequent adjustment period.

THE AFTERMATH OF SEXUAL ASSAULT FOR THE WOMAN

"When they ask us, from their place of deepest despair, "Why should I live?", our answer must be ready, and must not be glib."
(Steele, 1987:20)

For the female victim of a sexual assault, the recovery period that follows is a long and difficult process. As a result of having endured and survived what is often a life-threatening situation, the victim may experience an onslaught of reactions severe enough to render her normal coping mechanisms ineffectual (Rose, 1991:86). It is for these reasons that, "for many women, the aftermath of the rape is worse than the physical pain of the actual rape" (Herman, 1984:33). The validity of this statement is revealed through a cursory examination of Cohen and Roth (1987), Katz (1984), McCahill, Meyer and Fischman (1979), Burgess and Holmstrom (1974), and Sutherland and Scherl (1970).

Prior to the 1970’s, the adjustment period following a woman’s sexual assault had been virtually ignored by researchers (Rose, 1986:817; Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:981; Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:503). According to Rose (1986:817), Sutherland and Scherl (1970) were the first to
initiate this kind of research with their article, "Patterns of Response Among Victims of Rape." Hence, it would seem most appropriate to begin with their findings.

SUTHERLAND AND SCHERL

Sutherland and Scherl identified and described three phases of trauma experienced by sexual assault victims. Their findings were based on a study of 13 female victims of sexual assault, aged 18 to 24 years old. The researchers came in contact with each of the victims at a community mental health centre, usually within 48 hours of the sexual assault, and periodically thereafter for one year. All of the victims were white, single, from low-income neighborhoods and shared similar backgrounds as well as accomplishments (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:503-504).

The three phases of psychological trauma experienced by sexual assault victims were the "acute reaction phase," the "outward adjustment phase" and the "integration and resolution phase."

According to Sutherland and Scherl (1970:504-507), the first trauma phase incorporates the victim's immediate reactions to the sexual assault and lasts from three days to three weeks. Typical reactions within this phase included shock, disbelief and dismay over the incident. Occasionally, the victim also experienced guilt, especially if she felt she had somehow precipitated the assault, as well as, anxiety over
having to inform boyfriends, family members or the police (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:504-505). In fact, Sutherland and Scherl (1970:505) discovered that the victim's perception of guilt greatly affected when and to whom she reported the sexual assault. For example:

One told her landlady the following day but refused to go to the hospital because she feared the doctors would be required to report the incident to the police. (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:505)

Within this phase, emphasis was placed on allowing the victim to talk about her fears. Sutherland and Scherl (1970:506) posit that to do otherwise "only confirms the girl's suspicion that what has happened is so terrible that no one wants to hear about it." In addition, treatment was recommended in order to help prepare the victim for any foreseeable problems in the future (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:506).

The second trauma phase, outward adjustment, is a period of pseudo-adjustment for the victim. Within this phase, the victim will often deny or repress fears and emotions previously experienced, withdraw from counselling and attempt to return to the lifestyle she had prior to the sexual assault (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:507). However, despite

\[13\] Since adjustment was not measured empirically, it can only be assumed that the level of adjustment was based on the victim's own assessment of how much she had changed since the sexual assault.

\[14\] Sutherland and Scherl do not specify how long this period could last.
the fact that the victim's response may reassure others, Sutherland and Scherl (1970:507-508) point out that the victim is only exacerbating the situation by denying her fears, and therefore should be encouraged to continue having treatment.\footnote{By their definition, treatment included appointments with either a psychiatrist, social worker, lawyer, gynecologist or clergyman (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:506).}

The final phase, integration and resolution, begins when the victim is unable to deny her feelings any longer and depression sets in (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:508). The inevitability of this phase is strengthened by Cohen and Roth (1987:533) who claim:

\textit{It is ... plausible in the case of rape that it would be extremely difficult to use avoidance effectively. The reminders are constant: Sex, interactions with men, harassment on the street, images in the media, and many other situations all force a rape victim to remember the event.}

Sutherland and Scherl (1970:510) assert that depression is a normal response at this time and, although often interpreted as such, is not a sign of illness. During this phase, treatment is also encouraged in order to aid the victim to resolve her fears and to successfully integrate the sexual assault experience into her life (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:508-510).

Although the research conducted by Sutherland and Scherl broke new ground in the area of sexual assault literature,
their study contained certain limitations. The primary limitation was the inability of their study population to be generically representative (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:510). Not only was their sample size small (n=13), but their participants were all young (18 to 24) and from low-income neighborhoods (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:510). Equally important was the fact that many of the victims in their study were sexually assaulted by black assailants. This factor becomes relevant when one considers that "90 percent of all reported rapes are (actually) intraracial, not interracial" (Herman, 1984:27). In juxtaposition, despite their claim that "the victims responded to the assaults in a pattern that may hold for other women under other circumstances" (Sutherland and Scherl, 1970:504), McCahill, Meyer and Fischman (1979:69) found interracial rapes "to present fewer adjustment difficulties than intraracial rapes."16

BURGESS AND HOLMSTROM

In contrast to Sutherland and Scherl (1970), Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) based the findings of their year long study on a larger sized sample of female sexual assault victims (n=92), aged 17 to 73 years old. In addition, their study

16According to the authors, although a victim of intraracial sexual assault will often have increased negative feelings towards all known men, "a victim of interracial rape may increase her level of racial hatred, but she need not abandon or fear her everyday world, in which most men are of her own race" (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:69).
population was heterogeneous in nature:

Disparate social classes were included in the victim population. Ethnic groups included fairly equal numbers of black and white women, plus a smaller number of Oriental, Indian, and Spanish-speaking women. In regard to work status, the victims were career women, housewives, college students, and women on welfare. (Also) the group included single, married, divorced, separated, and widowed women as well as women living with men by consensual agreement. (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:981)

The researchers first came into contact with victims at the emergency ward of Boston City Hospital and had at least one follow-up session, either directly or indirectly, with each victim.

From their research, Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) coined the term "rape trauma syndrome" to describe the various symptoms and phases experienced by victims in the aftermath of sexual assault (Rose, 1986:817). According to the researchers, the syndrome "is an acute stress reaction to a life-threatening situation" (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982).

Rape trauma syndrome usually involves two phases of reaction: an "acute phase of disorganization" and a "long-term phase of reorganization." According to Burgess and Holmstrom (1974:982), the first trauma phase begins immediately following the rape, lasts two to three weeks and is characterized by the victim's lifestyle becoming highly disorganized. As previously noted by Sutherland and Scherl (1970) in their "acute reaction phase," victims' initial responses included a variety of emotions, such as shock,
disbelief, anger, fear and anxiety. These were labelled "impact reactions" (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982).

Although the majority of emotional reactions persisted throughout the acute reaction phase, some were later replaced by feelings of humiliation, self-blame, embarrassment and revenge (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:983). In terms of the victim's recovery, however, feelings of self-blame have proved particularly debilitating. As Katz and Burt (1988:166) point out from their research:

The more women blamed themselves for the rape, the more suicidal they had been since the rape, the greater the likelihood that they had been psychiatrically hospitalized, and the lower their self-esteem. The extent to which women blamed themselves also was associated with the amount of counselling they received; more blame accompanied more hours of counselling.

In addition to the victim's emotional reactions, Burgess and Holmstrom observed that a variety of "somatic reactions" were quite common. These included "physical trauma," "skeletal muscle tension," "gastrointestinal irritability" and "genitourinary disturbance" (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982-983). Physical trauma was defined as general soreness and bruising, especially on the breasts, thighs, legs, arms and throat (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982). In contrast, skeletal muscle tension included tension headaches, fatigue, edginess and disturbed sleep patterns (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982). Victims who experienced gastrointestinal irritability, complained of stomach pains,
loss of appetite and feeling nauseated (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982). Genitourinary disturbance, on the other hand, was defined as "gynecological symptoms such as vaginal discharge, itching, a burning sensation on urination ... rectal bleeding and pain" (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:982-983).

The second trauma phase was described as a period of reorganization for the victim.\footnote{Burgess and Holmstrom do not specify how long this phase could last.} Within this phase, Burgess and Holmstrom (1974:983) argued that the victim's ability to cope often depends on her "ego strength, social network support, and the way people treated (her) as (a) victim." Long-term effects in this phase included increased motor activity,\footnote{Increased motor activity included the following actions: changing one's permanent residence (n=44) or telephone number to feel safer, taking a trip to "get away," and staying with either friends (n=25) or family members (n=48) for support (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:983).} nightmares\footnote{Burgess and Holmstrom (1974:984) claim that a victim's nightmares and dreams can take two forms: either the victim wakes up before she can undertake a certain action in her dream (n=29), or the victim is able to undertake a particular action, such as fighting off her assailant.} and "traumatophobia" (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:983-984). With respect to traumatophobia, Burgess and Holmstrom claimed that although Sandor Rado's term was originally coined to describe how war victims reacted to war, it is also an appropriate term for describing the defensive reactions of sexual assault victims to their sexual

In both the "disorganization phase," and the "reorganization phase," Burgess and Holmstrom recommend that victims receive "issue-oriented, crisis counselling treatment" in order to facilitate their recoveries (1974:984). Inherent within this type of counselling are the firm beliefs that sexual assault results in a crisis for the victim, the victim's level of pre-sexual assault functioning is normal, unless found otherwise, and counselling should pinpoint only the specific problems that result from the sexual assault (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:984). Therefore, if victims are found to have a previous history of difficulties (physical, psychiatric or social), Burgess and Holmstrom suggest that, alone, crisis counselling is inadequate and should take a secondary position to other treatment models such as psychotherapy (1974:985).

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20 Most phobic reactions were directly related to the characteristics of the sexual assault. For example, a fear of indoors is the result of being attacked indoors. Others included a fear of outdoors, fear of being alone, fear of people behind them, sexual fears and fear of crowds (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974:984).

21 Since recovery was not empirically measured, it can only be assumed that recovery was based on the victim's own assessment of how much she had changed since the sexual assault.

22 Although Burgess and Holmstrom recommend psychotherapy (the treatment of victims using psychological means) only when victims possess a pre-sexual assault history of psychiatric problems, various clinicians argue the need for psychotherapy even when victims do not have psychiatric histories (Dye and Roth, 1991, Ochberg, 1991; Rose, 1991; Rose, 1986).
MCCAHIll, MEYER AND FISCHMAN

In their account, *The Aftermath of Rape*, McCahill, Meyer and Fischman (1979) detailed the aftermaths of 1,376 female sexual assault victims for a one year period. Although the majority of victims were black (73.4 percent), with regard to age, marital status, socioeconomic status, victim-offender relationship and sexual assault type, their study population was heterogeneous in nature (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:7-8).

In terms of their methodology, the research by McCahill, Meyer and Fischman was conducted as follows: Through prior arrangements made with the Philadelphia General Hospital, staff social workers were notified of all sexual assault victims. Within 48 hours, social workers contacted each victim and attempted to secure her cooperation to be interviewed at four different intervals21 (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:10-12). The research data was then collected and analyzed according to the research findings of Burgess and Holmstrom (1974). Hence, whereas initial interviews measured the "disorganization phase," final interviews measured the "reorganization phase" (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:24).

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21The first interview occurred within one week of the sexual assault. In addition, victims were interviewed at three months, seven months and eleven months (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:12).
With few exceptions, the adjustment patterns\textsuperscript{24} of victims articulated in this study supported the earlier research findings of Burgess and Holmstrom (1974). For example, victims experienced traumataphobia,\textsuperscript{25} nightmares, and a change in eating habits (47.3 percent) and sleeping patterns (49.9 percent),\textsuperscript{26} (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:25-34). Additional adjustment patterns included a change in heterosexual relationships, a change in relations with family members and feelings of unattractiveness (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:30-37).

According to the authors, changes in heterosexual relationships took one of three forms: a fear and distrust of known men, of unknown men (57.7 percent), or of all men (40.2 percent). While feelings of distrust towards known men

\textsuperscript{24}Within this study, "levels of adjustment (were) based, for the most part, on the victim's own assessment of changes in her patterns of interaction, (and as well), the appearance of an adjustment problem may be significant only if (it) represents a departure from prerape behavior" (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:23).

\textsuperscript{25}Similar phobic reactions in this study included a fear of being alone (65.9 percent), fear of indoors (72.2 percent), fear of crowds (50.3 percent) and sexual fears (46.6 percent) (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:27-34).

\textsuperscript{26}The authors found that, depending on their pre-sexual assault coping mechanisms, victims would display either an increase or a decrease in eating and sleeping behavior. Moreover, the authors theorized that a prolonged change could "reflect the victim's estimation of self-worth" (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:25-26).
usually developed if the victim knew her accoster,\textsuperscript{27} when the assailant was a stranger, the victim was more likely to develop negative feelings towards unknown men.\textsuperscript{28} However, in those cases where the victim developed worsened relations with all men, the authors suggested that "her negative feelings (were) ... of sufficient magnitude to materially affect the quality of any interactions that she (had) with men"\textsuperscript{29} (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:33).

In contrast, the authors maintained that changes in relationships with family members took one of two forms: Family members will either be supportive, in which case the victim may feel positively or negatively protected, or unsupportive, in which case they may blame her (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:37).

In regard to feelings of unattractiveness (18.7 percent), the authors argued that these feelings often emanate from how a victim is treated by those around her. Hence, "if her family and friends ... fail to provide her with ... support, she may feel that the rape has effected certain detrimental changes in her" (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:36).

\textsuperscript{27}One exception involved women who had been sexually assaulted before. Hence, regardless of whether these women were assaulted by men known or unknown to them, 50.5 percent "experienced negative feelings toward known men" (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:54).

\textsuperscript{28}Regardless of the woman's relationship with her accoster, 77.8 percent of employed victims also reacted negatively towards unknown men (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:56).

\textsuperscript{29}Victims possessing post-secondary school educations often fell into this category (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:57).
In addition to the articulation of victims' adjustment patterns, McCahill, Meyer and Fischman observed the impact of certain variables on the victim's adjustment. For example, age, marital status and contact with the criminal justice system.\footnote{Other variables previously mentioned, include pre-sexual assault problems (such as already having been a sexual assault victim), employment status and education.}

With respect to short-term adjustment, the equivalent of one year, the authors found older women more likely to display adjustment problems than younger women.\footnote{The authors suggested that because our society teaches adults to be accountable for their actions, older women may have fewer people to comfort her and therefore, feelings of self-blame may be intensified. Moreover, because older women are more set in their lifestyles, they are less likely to change their environments, even if a lifestyle change was the answer (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:39-41).} In terms of long-term adjustment, however, the authors found the reverse to be so\footnote{It was suggested that, whereas youth generally connotes greater emotional and physical security, as the woman matures, she will eventually have to face her sexual assault problems singlehandedly (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:41).} (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:39-41).\footnote{The research conducted by Cohen and Roth (1987) supported these findings.}

Regarding marital status, the authors found that 45.5 percent of married women experienced problems in their married relationships, whereas only 23.5 percent of unmarried women experienced problems in theirs. The authors point out that, although a number of factors can contribute to worsened relationships, blaming the victim and viewing her as 'damaged
goods' were frequently cited reasons (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:47-48).

Although some victims reported the trial experience to be therapeutic, at nearly all levels of contact with the criminal justice system, the treatment received by most victims had a profound impact on their adjustments (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1970:211). Victims were not only forced to contend with an inefficient system, but with frequent accusations of victim precipitation (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:244). In fact, the authors found that how victims were treated at the first level, by the police, was usually a good indicator of how the victim was treated at subsequent levels.

The police are largely in control of whether a victim is believed, whether a case is sufficiently investigated and the offender apprehended, and whether the quality of the courtroom presentation is adequate to insure a reasonable possibility of conviction. (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:244)\(^3\)

Perhaps of greater significance than which variables were correlated to adjustment problems, however, was the one variable that was not. Contrary to popular thinking, the authors discovered that violent sexual assaults, unless life-

\(^3\)Despite the new sexual assault law, the situation in Canada is very similar. For example, one study found that out of 122 offenders, the police alone were responsible for filtering out 58 percent. This high percentage was found not only to reflect skepticism by police in believing sexual assault allegations, but also, stereotypical notions by police of "how victims should react" (Gunn and Minch, 1988:53-57).
threatening, were not highly correlated to adjustment problems:

What is likely to be viewed by both the courts and the media as a somewhat less serious assault (for example, victim and offender previously acquainted, the incident arising out of normal social activity, no visible physical injuries) often leads to far more severe adjustment problems than a brutal, back-alley gang rape, irrespective of any sociodemographic differences among victims. (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:61)

On the other hand, with respect to violent sexual assaults, these same authors conceded that "certain sexual aspects of rape may be impossible to deal with on a conscious level" (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:66).36

COHEN AND ROTH

In their article, "The Psychological Aftermath of Rape: Long-Term Effects and Individual Differences in Recovery," Cohen and Roth (1987) explored the variations in recovery37 of

35The authors found that when life-threatening variables were involved in sexual assaults (choking, use of weapons), victims faced the combined factor of having to face their own mortalities. Hence, "unlike many of the victim factors, which tend to become less strongly associated with adjustment difficulties 1 year after the rape, (these factors) continue to affect adversely adjustment 1 year later" (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:62).

36For example, compared to victims whose assaults did not involve rectal intercourse, of those victims whose assaults did involve rectal intercourse, nearly twice as many experienced nightmares (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:66).

37In this study, victims' recoveries were based on the Modified Fear Survey, the Symptom Check List 90-revised, the Social Adjustment Scale Self-Report and the Impact of Event Scale (Cohen and Roth, 1987:526).
72 non-recent victims of sexual assault.\(^{38}\) In contrast to previous research (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974; Sutherland and Scherl, 1970; McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979), these women had been victimized "an average of 8 years prior to the study" (Cohen and Roth, 1987:525). In addition, as opposed to interviewing victims, Cohen and Roth (1987:526) obtained their research findings using questionnaires.\(^{39}\) Although the majority of the women in their study were white (97 percent), in all other regards they were heterogeneous in nature (Cohen and Roth, 1987:528).

In many respects, the results of Cohen's and Roth's research were inconclusive. By their own admission, their study was unable to provide "any insights into how some women are able to cope effectively with rape" (Cohen and Roth, 1987:533). Nevertheless, their research resulted in two important findings.

First, a previous history of sexual assault was found to impact on the victim's functioning ability. As opposed to one-time victims of sexual assaults, victims with sexual assault histories (n=26) displayed greater amounts of hostility, depression, anxiety and fear (Cohen and Roth, 1897:529).

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\(^{38}\)Of these women, six were incest victims and seven were victims of attempted sexual assault (Cohen and Roth, 1987:526).

\(^{39}\)Women who were interested in the study responded to ads placed by the researchers. Each respondent was then instructed to complete and return a questionnaire. (Cohen and Roth, 1987:526).
Second, Cohen and Roth found that victims recovered more within the first three months of being sexually assaulted than at any other time. After three months, victims showed little additional improvement (1987:527). In support of their finding, previous researchers discovered "that victims' distress at three months remained stable at four years" (Kilpatrick, Veronen and Best, 1985:136).

KATZ

Katz (1984), both a professional counsellor and sexual assault victim, best exemplifies the plight of sexual assault victims in her own account, No Fairy Godmothers, No Magic Wands: The Healing Process After Rape. Using a journal, Katz documented her reactions, emotions and fears, from the time she was sexually assaulted, throughout several years of her recovery process. In many respects, the adjustment problems she experienced followed the adjustment patterns outlined by previous researchers (McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979; Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974). In contrast, however, she reported frequently experiencing "flashbacks to the rape," in which strong reminders of the assault caused her to momentarily relive the experience (Katz, 1984:26).

Having completed the literature review on the aftermath of sexual assault for the woman, the next section examines the aftermath of sexual assault for the husband and how his reactions can affect his spouse's recovery.
THE HUSBAND'S REACTIONS AND HOW THEY CAN AFFECT HIS SPOUSE'S RECOVERY

Despite the growing body of literature focusing on the aftermath of sexual assault for a woman, few writers make more than truncated references regarding the affect of a husband's reactions on the woman's recovery (Rodkin, Hunt and Dustan Cowan, 1982:91). In fact, there are those that deny social support from a husband plays any kind of role in the woman's recovery from sexual assault (Popiel and Susskind, 1985).\(^{40}\) However, as one group of authors point out:

Whereas the married rape victim may blame herself for her victimization, in most cases her adjustment problems are due, at least in part, to the reaction of her husband to the rape and/or how she perceives his reaction. (Mc Cahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979:47)

The extent to which this is true is best reflected in the research findings of Silverman (1978) and Holmstrom and Burgess (1979).

SILVERMAN

According to Popiel and Susskind (1985:647), Silverman (1978) was the first to describe the aftermath of sexual assault for married couples. Based on his clinical observations as a Boston Psychiatrist, Silverman articulated

\(^{40}\)By their own admission, however, their findings were inconclusive due to the "limitations in the measurement of social support" and adjustment (Popiel and Susskind, 645:672).
the common reaction patterns of husbands and explained how these reactions could inhibit their spouses' recoveries from sexual assault.

In his article, "Sharing the Crisis of Rape: Counseling the Mates and Families of Victims," Silverman argued that, whether or not husbands are conscious of it, their reactions frequently reflect commonly held misconceptions, or myths, surrounding the nature of sexual assault. He further argued that because of these mental stumbling blocks, husbands may be unable to respond in a compassionate and supportive manner toward their spouses. (Silverman, 1978:167-166).

According to Silverman, the two most prevalent myths include: First, that sexual assault is a crime of passion; and second, that sexual assault is the misuse of one man's property by another (Silverman, 1978:167-168). Inherent within this first myth are certain other beliefs. For example, that "nice women don't get raped, only sexy young women get raped, or any woman who is raped must have asked for it" (Silverman, 1978:167). Husbands who maintain these beliefs tend to doubt their spouses or blame them altogether for having been sexually assaulted; express anger and criticism at the woman for not being careful enough; or accuse their spouses of having enjoyed the experience. For example:

"In fact, according to Karmen (1984:114), "acquaintance-rape victims are more likely to be blamed than those sexually assaulted by a stranger, perhaps because other people find it doubly disturbing to live with the knowledge ... that potential rapists are men they know."
One husband was distraught to learn that his wife had experienced an orgasm during the rape and felt enraged because he was certain that he 'would never be able to give her as exciting a sexual experience again.' (Silverman, 1978:167).

In contrast, husbands reacting to the second myth, that sexual assault is the misuse of one man's property by another, "may feel personally wronged and attacked by the rape of 'their woman'" (Silverman, 1978:168). In viewing their spouses as their own private property, husbands frequently show anger and disgust towards their wives for allowing themselves "to become devalued" and "unclean" (Silverman, 1978:168). On the other extreme, husbands may also feel a sense of failure for not having protected their spouses in the first place (Silverman, 1978:169).

According to Silverman (1978:167), husbands who react to sexual assault myths often tend to exacerbate the recovery problems for their spouses and "make the revictimization of the woman a real possibility." Hence, in order to prevent this occurrence, Silverman emphasizes the need to educate husbands concerning the real nature of sexual assault, and the potential hazzard such reactions can have on their partners' recoveries (Silverman, 1978:167).

HOLMSTROM AND BURGESS

In contrast to Silverman's observations, Holmstrom and Burgess (1979) based their research findings on structured
interviews with 16 cohabitating couples, both married and unmarried. Although the characteristics of their male study population were not specified, their female study population was heterogeneous in regards to age, colour and occupation (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:322).

The researchers first came into contact with victims at the emergency ward of Boston City Hospital. While at the hospital, the researchers were able to interview all of the victims along with the majority of the victims' partners.42 After the first interview, at least one more follow-up session was conducted (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:322).

The research findings of Holmstrom and Burgess (1979:321) revealed that the reactions of male partners encompassed two components: The first component involves his immediate perceptions of who he thinks is the real victim, seeking revenge and "if-only feelings;" and the second component involves his subsequent interactions with his partner.

In their assessment of the effect of the male's reactions on the woman's recovery, Holmstrom and Burgess (1979:322-323) divided the male reactions into two categories, modern and traditional. Whereas modern reactions were considered to facilitate the woman's recovery, more traditional reactions,

42Although each of the 16 victims were interviewed, only 11 males consented to an interview. Nine interviews were done in person at either the hospital or the courthouse, and two were completed over the telephone. Therefore, in five cases the researchers relied on the female's description of her partner's reactions (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:322).
those having their foundations in sexual assault myths, were viewed as inhibiting her recovery.

In regard to the first component, the male's perceptions of who he saw as the real victim determined whether his reaction was modern or traditional in nature. For example, a male's response was categorized as modern (n=9) if he showed concern over the fact that the woman had been hurt (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:323). In contrast, a traditional response (n=6) reflected the male's belief that he was the real victim, that the woman, as his property, had been devalued, and that she was "possibly to blame as well" (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:323).

With respect to the male's wish to seek revenge, seven males wanted to deal with the assailant themselves and six wanted to pursue legal means (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:323-324). According to Holmstrom and Burgess (1979:323, each category was represented by an equal number of men with traditional views (those who considered themselves to be the primary victims) as well as modern views (those who felt the woman was the primary victim). However, Holmstrom and Burgess (1979:324) also found that, regardless of whether a husband's or boyfriend's reactions were modern, if he pursued her accosted against her wishes, she was forced to spend her time acting "as a moderating influence."43

43Although the authors are not specific as to the consequences of having to act as a moderating influence, it is assumed that, while acting in this regard, the woman will have less time to deal
According to Holmstrom and Burgess (1979:324), husbands and boyfriends who expressed if-only-feelings "wished they had done something differently and thus perhaps the incident would not have turned out the way it did." For example, one male expressed this type of reaction in the following:

She went down an alley. She normally would have had fear and not done that. What bothers me is she wasn't thinking. Our argument made her more upset. (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:324)

In the second component involving the male's subsequent interactions with the victim, the male not only has to deal with his own feelings and emotions, he must also "interact with his wife or girlfriend who is herself in a state of psychological crisis" (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:325). Due to the woman's need to talk about her fears and phobias,¹⁴ as well as to feel reassured that she was not to blame for being sexually assaulted, victims are likely to perceive their male partners as unsupportive if they fail to encourage

with her own emotional reactions.

¹⁴Although the researchers are not specific in regards to the affects of if-only-feelings on the woman's recovery, it is assumed that the male's self blame has a negative impact because it reflects the traditional male role of protecting his property, in this case, the woman.

¹⁵In addition to talking about her new phobias, the woman may find herself becoming very dependent on her partner in order to feel more safe and secure. For example, if she has become afraid of outdoors, she may even refuse to get the mail by herself. Hence, a partner who is unwilling to help her, or even acknowledge her fears, may inhibit her recovery period (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:326).
communication in these regards. In fact, failing to communicate was the pattern in 12 out of 15 couples (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:325).

In addition, although "all couples had some problems resuming sexual relations," male partners were generally perceived as unsupportive if they showed either an impatience or a reluctance to resume them (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:326-327). Males with traditional views were especially likely to be unsupportive in these areas (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:325-327).

**SUMMARY**

This chapter was divided into four sections: "The Canadian Sexual Assault Law;" "Types of Sexual Assault;" "The Aftermath of Sexual Assault for the Woman;" and "The Husband’s Reactions and How They Can Affect His Spouse’s Recovery." Whereas the first section introduced the three legal categories of sexual assault and outlined the problems surrounding it’s legal definition, the second section highlighted the various types of sexual assault and explained how they can be characterized.

In a review of Cohen and Roth (1987), Katz (1984), McCahill, Meyer and Fischman (1979), Burgess and Holmstrom

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46 Whereas an impatience to resume sexual relations was perceived as unsupportive, especially if the woman had developed phobic reactions to sex, a reluctance to resume sexual relations often reflected his traditional belief that the woman was ‘used goods’ (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1979:326-327).
(1974), and Sutherland and Scherl (1970), the third section outlined many of the difficulties faced by women recovering from sexual assault. This section described how victims of sexual assault suffer, not only physically, but often emotionally, psychologically and socially as well.

The fourth section, which reviewed research by Silverman (1978) and Holmstrom and Burgess (1979), revealed that a husband reacts both to his wife and to the sexual assault. The studies also explained that when husbands react negatively, it is frequently due to their misconceptions surrounding sexual assaults in general.

Through a select review of the sexual assault literature, the researcher drew attention to the contributions of previous researchers. These provide the foundations against which the results of the current study can later be compared.

The next chapter examines the theoretical perspectives used in organizing and analyzing the data obtained in this study. Although the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism is the primary theory utilized, due to the criticism that it minimizes hierarchal relations, liberal feminism has also been incorporated. Through an examination of liberal feminism, certain insights may be gained into the origins of the misconceptions surrounding sexual assaults.
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Every researcher sees the world from a different perspective. That is why, in any research study, it is important to acknowledge the theoretical perspective used in conducting the research and in analyzing the data results. This research study was designed to answer the question: To what extent do the husband's reactions to his wife being sexually assaulted, help or hinder her recovery from the assault? To answer this question, the author seeks first, to discover what the marriage relationship was like prior to the sexual assault; second, to articulate both the husband's and the wife's verbal and behavioral reactions to the sexual assault and to each other; and third, to discover how, if at all, the husband's reactions affect his partner's recovery from the assault. The theoretical perspectives chosen to guide this investigation were the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism and liberal feminism. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of each of these theories.

The chapter is divided into four sections: "Symbolic Interactionism and it's Varieties;" "Feminism and it's Varieties;" "The Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism;" and "Liberal Feminist Theory." The first section looks at the general nature of symbolic interactionism and the two schools of thought within it.
SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND IT'S VARIETIES

Symbolic interactionism is a social psychological perspective which concerns itself with the nature of interaction, that is, "the dynamic social activities taking place between persons" (Charon, 1989: 22). As a theory, symbolic interactionism was chosen because of "its long-standing focus on socialization and its sophisticated treatment of this topic" (Mackie, 1987: 112). Understanding how people are socialized to adopt either masculine or feminine traits, based solely on their sex, is the central focus of this study.

Despite its numerous varieties, theoretical texts (Chafetz, 1988; Deegan and Hill, 1987) often divide the proponents of symbolic interactionism into two schools of thought: The Chicago School associated with Herbert Blumer; and the Iowa School associated with Manford Kuhn.

Kuhn argues that people acquire a core self-concept during the childhood socialization process which shapes and constrains their definitions of situations. This makes individual adult behavior quite predictable; interaction with others is essentially seen as the release of a preexisting core self. Social structure, while defined as the product or outcome of interaction, is viewed as then taking on a

47Despite the fact that Symbolic Interactionism was born out of the lectures given by George Herbert Mead (Rock, 1979:26), "the historical fact is that it was Blumer's interpretation of Mead's position, not Mead's methodological position itself, that became the dominant orientation in symbolic interactionism" (Ritzer, 1983:180).
stable, independent existence that is resistant to change. (Chafetz, 1988:19)

Based on Kuhn’s argument, supporters of the Iowa School would suggest that people may be incapable of change. Likewise, any attempts to rid society of existing sexual assault myths would be a difficult, if not an impossible task. It is this author’s opinion, however, that such an argument merely encourages self-defeat. Once people believe their attempts to change society are in vain, they may ultimately stop trying.

In contrast, the Chicago School emphasizes the situational nature and indeterminancy of both individual behavior and social organization. People constantly define and redefine the situations in which they find themselves, changing not only their definitions but social structure as well. The emphasis is on the constant process of emergence of social structure. This approach de-emphasizes the concept of core self, replacing it with a focus on the creative, spontaneous elements of human behavior. (Chafetz, 1988:19)

Here, the flexibility of human nature and human society are recognized. Although humans are seen as social products, they are not considered passive to their environments. Not only is society capable of molding its inhabitants, but humans are capable of molding the society in which they live. Due to the importance placed upon the "reciprocity of person and social structure" (Mackie, 1987:112), it follows then, that if sexual assault myths can be learned, they can also be unlearned and society will gradually change. In other words, "there are no unchanging truths in symbolic interactionism, only the world

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we create and maintain in our daily lives" (Deegan, 1987:7). It is for this reason that the Chicago School has been chosen as the primary body of knowledge for this investigation.

However, this research does "not deal simply with women's lives but with women's lives within the context of a patriarchal world" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989:42). As Stewart (1984:415) points out:

> Although the symbolic interactionist perspective had offered strong support for feminists' concern with the power of words ... power was ... ignored and meaning was described as entirely variable ... Incest, rape, wife battering and the like were simply social creations, interactions with variable meaning developed by the interactants, not acts of violence against women. Inadequate attention was given to the obvious fact that some people have more power to create reality than others do.

As a result, feminism, specifically contemporary liberal feminism, will be used to augment the primary theory of symbolic interactionism.

In many ways, symbolic interactionism and feminism are compatible theories. According to Chafetz (1988:17), symbolic interactionism, unlike many other theories, "contain(s) little that feminists have had to revise or reject." In fact, the way in which symbolic interactionists have dealt with childhood socialization has had a major impact on feminist sociologists (Chafetz 1988:21).
FEMINISM AND IT'S VARIETIES

Feminism’s strength lies in explaining the importance of power. Feminism begins from the premise that women are oppressed and that their "freedom of action is limited by the power of men (who) possess more economic, cultural, and social resources than women" (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:10). Due to such gross inequality, feminists argue that women's subordination to men can not continue to go unquestioned or unchallenged (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:10). Subsequently, the role of feminism is to "challenge, counteract, or change a status quo that disadvantages or devalues women" (Chafetz, 1988:5). In addition, since much of the research on sexual assault has been done by feminist theorists, they have acquired great insight into this area.

Like symbolic interactionism, however, feminism is not a unified theory. Contemporary feminists* "do not agree on the ways in which we can explain women's subordination or on how women can be emancipated" (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:11).

Liberal feminists, for example, argue that women are subordinate to men due to discriminatory laws and policies. These feminists claim that, in order to achieve equal

*According to Tong (1989:2), contemporary feminists define themselves "in reaction against traditional liberal feminism." Traditional liberal feminists did not believe in disadvantaging men in order to allow women an opportunity to gain equality. They believed that to discriminate against men was no better than the practice of discriminating against women. Instead, they advocated for "gender justice." In other words, ensuring that the "rules of the game" were the same for men and women was more important than ensuring equality for women (Tong, 1989:12).
opportunity with men, not only must such laws and policies be removed, but reverse discrimination (laws and policies favouring women) must be temporarily employed (Tong, 1989:28-30).

In contrast, Marxist feminists argue that women are oppressed because of their exclusion from the process of economic production. Once capitalism is overthrown and replaced with a communist society, however, they argue that everyone, including women, will share equal status (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:11-12).\(^{49}\)

Radical feminists argue that women are subordinate to men because men have historically had, and will continue to have, "a psychological and even perhaps a physical need to coerce and dominate women" (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:12).\(^{50}\) According to these feminists, "women are, for one thing, a uniquely effective means of satisfying male sexual desire" (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1992:336). In order to gain equality, radical feminists would argue that women must not only confront patriarchal ideas, but separate themselves from its material constructs. For example, the family and

\(^{49}\)Other feminists have criticized this argument on the grounds that it fails "to recognize that the sex-gender system is independent of the class system" (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:13). Tong (1989:174) also adds that it lacks a gender analysis of why women were initially assigned to work inside the home and men to work outside the home.

\(^{50}\)Abbott and Wallace (1990:173-174) point out that this argument lends false credit to sexual assault offenders who argue that their victims "asked for it."
heterosexual relationships (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1992:336).

Socialist feminists, on the other hand, are divided in their views of women's subordination. Whereas some see women's subordination as the result of both capitalism and patriarchy, others see it as the result of men's domination (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1992:337). Both agree, however, that an important step towards women's equality is the elimination of prejudicial and oppressive practices (Lengermann and Niebrugg-Brantley 1992:338).\(^5\)

Although each of these theories holds some appeal for the author,\(^5\) utilizing more than one feminist theory would not only be unnecessary for the purpose outlined previously, but could complicate that purpose unnecessarily. As a result, liberal feminism has been chosen due to its more moderate approach towards emancipating women and because it more closely resembles the ideas of the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism.

The next portion of this chapter provides a general overview of the Chicago School by focusing on the central

\(^5\)Although the four perspectives identified here are commonly recognized as the four mainstremas of contemporary feminist thought, Abbott and Wallace (1990:11) caution that these categories are not all encompassing and tend to "force women into a category, one with which they may not themselves identify." Lengermann and Niebrugg-Brantley (1992:318), for example, prefer to broadly categorize feminist theories as follows: "Theories of difference;" "theories of inequality," and "theories of oppression."

\(^5\)For example, Susan Brownmiller (1975), a radical feminist, is frequently quoted throughout this paper.
concepts and proposals of the theory.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

According to Blummer (1969), there are three basic tenets of the Chicago School. The first tenet is that people act toward things, such as physical objects, other people and ideas, based on what they mean to them (Blummer, 1969:2). For example, although a chair could be used a number of different ways, if a person sees a chair only as a thing to sit on, that is what that person will use it for.

The second tenet of the Chicago School is that "the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (Blummer, 1969:2). For this reason, every "thing" (including a husband, wife and a sexual assault victim) is actually a social object. In other words, although "objects may exist in physical form ... they are seen, not in the raw, but only through a perspective of some kind" (Charon, 1989:37). For example, if a male is socialized by his older brothers to see young women only as potential bed mates, that is how he will act towards them. As Charon (1989:38) points out, the way people see social objects is based on "the use they have for us."

The last tenet of the Chicago School is that "these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (Blummer, 1969:2). This interpretive process
involves two steps. First, the actor communicates to himself or herself the thing of meaning that he or she is acting toward. Secondly, the actor "selects, checks, suspends, regroups, and transforms the meanings in the light of the situation ... and the direction of his action" (Blumer, 1969:5). To continue with the above example, then, if the male was shown by others that young women could also be good friends or his competition for a new job, then young women could begin to take on new meanings for him.

From this brief introduction Blumer (1969) draws attention to three basic ideas: The actor, action and interaction. These three ideas form the essence of symbolic interactionism. As such, the remainder of this review will be formulated around these principles.

THE ACTOR

Within symbolic interactionism individuals are referred to as actors. According to Charon (1989:154), every actor enters a situation with "self, mind, symbols, significant others, reference groups, past experiences, perspectives, interests and goals". Each of these concepts are discussed in the following.

Self

According to Rock (1979:102), the "self" is the central concept of symbolic interactionism around which all other
events and processes revolve. By definition, the self, like every other "thing," is a social object pointed out to the individual and socially defined (Charon, 1989:65).\footnote{Blumner, on the other hand, would state that the self is not a "thing," but a process. This is because "the self helps allow human beings to act rather than simply respond to external stimuli" (Ritzer, 1983:170). Moreover, Charon (1989:65) states, that the self is also a process because it is "constantly changing as the individual interacts with others."}

An individual becomes aware of his or her self by means of "reflexive activity." That is, the individual is able to see him or her self from the viewpoint of others with whom that individual interacts (Stryker, 1980:59). Hence, just as a chair is pointed out and defined to the individual, so is the individual’s self. According to Ritzer (1983:170), Cooley (1902) coined this idea the "looking-glass self," a process comprised of three components:

First, we imagine how we appear to others. Second, we imagine what their judgement of that appearance must be. Third, we develop some self-feeling, such as pride or mortification, as a result of our imagining others’ judgments.

Mead (1934), on the other hand, explains the self in a different way. To Mead, the self is, at once, a subject and an object; the "I" and the "me" (Ritzer, 1983:165). Together, the "I" and the "me" "make up personality as it emerges from the social process" (Stryker, 1980:38). As an object, the "me" is "the internalization of the organized attitude of others ... (and) represents the forces of conformity and of
social control" (Ritzer, 1983:165). In contrast, the "I" is the response to the me (Ritzer, 1983:165). It is the spontaneous part of the self which "arises with the emergence of language" (Rock, 1979:119). In other words, whereas the "I" is our consciousness, the "me" is the result of how others see us. For example, if a sexual assault victim is continually told she is dirty and no longer attractive, she will eventually see herself in that respect.

According to Ritzer (1983:165), Mead (1934) saw two stages as being essential to the development of the self, the "play stage" and the "game stage." Within the play stage:

the child learns to take the roles of specific significant people, such as father, mother, sister, or brother. This ... gives children a discrete sense of social reality. Since children are taking a series of discrete roles, they develop a very discrete sense of their selves. They can see themselves in different ways, as a number of different people might see them. (Ritzer, 1983:165)

Hence, in this stage, for example, children will learn their names, gender, how good or bad they are, how attractive they are, and so on.

For the purposes of this study, learning gender,\(^3\) or genderized behavior, is of particular interest. Goffman (1987), for example, acknowledges the importance of being

\(^3\)Gender is "learned social behavior associated with each anatomical sex. It is a social classification ... (involving) more than simply learning masculine or feminine behavior" (Deegan, 1987:4).
labeled a male or female at birth based on one’s genitalia. As he states:

This placement by physical configuration allows a sex-linked label of identification. (...) for example, man-woman, male-female, boy-girl, he-she.) ... From the start, persons who are sorted into the male class and persons who are sorted into the other are given different treatment, acquire different experience, enjoy and suffer different expectations. (Goffman, 1987:52-53).

In other words, the acquirement of gender becomes central to the individual’s self concept. It is through this process of acquiring gender identity that, although often foreign to reality, males are viewed as stronger, tougher and smarter, and females as purer, weaker, and less capable. As a result, females are placed at a "distinctive disadvantage" throughout their lives (Goffman, 1987:72-73).

Role taking, while an essential aspect in the initial development of the self, continues to hold importance throughout the individual’s life. As Charon (1989:105) points out, role taking is "an integral part of all interaction, necessary for understanding the other and being understood by the other." It is in this sense that Stryker (1980:37-38) describes role taking as "anticipating others’ responses on the basis of common participation in a communication process." As such, role taking is an important concept in this study. How well couples succeed in role taking determines how well they will succeed at both handling the aftermath of sexual assault and keeping their marriages together.
Although children acquire a great deal within the play stage, it is not until the game stage that they acquire a more "integrated sense of the self" (Ritzer, 1983:165). Within this stage, they become capable of taking a broader view of both situations and of themselves. This is called taking the role of the "generalized other" (Ritzer, 1983:165).

Mind

Mind and self are closely related for it is the self that enables mind activity to exist (Charon, 1989:95). The mind is defined as "an internal conversation with one's self through the use of significant symbols" (Ritzer, 1983:163). As Charon (1989:91) states, the actor is constantly thinking in every situation he or she encounters. As the actor talks with others, he or she is simultaneously talking to his or her self. This is called "mind activity" (Charon, 1989:91).56

Prior to actually taking action, the actor uses the mind to first define the situation to his or her self. Plummer (1975) describes this process as follows:

Whenever a person enters any social encounter (and effectively he does this every waking minute of the

55The "generalized other" is the result of the individual combining all his or her significant others into one broad view of the self. Once this is accomplished, the individual is believed to have reached adulthood (Charon, 1989:68).

56Charon (1989:96) adds that this mind activity is actually a covert form of action.
day), many processes come into play. Together they constitute a massive scheme for interpretation, for making sense of the situation in which he is placed. Before he does anything, the person has to indicate to himself what he is expected to do, how he would like to be seen, what "meanings" the objects in his path have, what meanings the other actors in the situation are attributing to him and their selves and so forth. (Plummer, 1975:13-14)

This is, in essence, the process of socialization. A process that not only prevades every day life, but is dominant throughout the entire lifespan (Plummer, 1975:14).

The definition of the situation is an important concept within this study. As outlined earlier, every woman recovers at a different rate depending on such factors as the characteristics of the sexual assault and how people respond to her. Thus, it is harder for some women to recover from sexual assault than for others. For this reason, it is important to discover, first, how each woman defines her sexual assault experience. Her definition will then be compared to how the husband defines her sexual assault experience. Each definition will incorporate such things as who the primary victim is and "ego involvement." As Laurer and Handel (1977:85) point out, "to understand how people define situations ... is to understand the meaning that the situation has for them and thereby to understand why they

57 The term ego involvement, or ego-involved motive, is defined as "the defense or enhancement of one's image in the eyes of others (or as one believes he will be judged by others)" (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969:267). For example, a sexual assault victim who is afraid of tarnishing her image in her husband's eyes, may be reluctant to tell him details of the sexual assault.
behave as they do in (it)."

In looking at how people define the situations they are in, it is necessary to keep in mind that the truth of the matter is not as important as what the person believes the truth to be. In the words of William Thomas (1928): "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas, 1928:572).

Symbols

Although Rock (1979) perceives the self to be the central concept within symbolic interactionism, others, like Charon (1989:35), insist that the "symbol" is the foundation upon which the perspective rests. As Charon (1989:35) argues, although symbolic life depends on people (or selves) for its existence, the reverse is also true: "Complex human society demands and depends on human symbolic life -- symbolic communication."

Symbols are defined as social objects "used for communication to self or for communication to others and to self" (Charon, 1989:40). That is, whereas in the first instance the actor is "thinking," in the second instance, the actor automatically must communicate to his or her self in order to communicate with others (Charon, 1989:41).

Symbols can be both significant and nonsignificant. Significant symbols are those used intentionally by people to represent other things (Charon, 1989:41). For example, a wave
of a hand often symbolizes a greeting between the actor and others. However, not all communication is symbolic. Communication can also be "nonsignificant" (Charon, 1989:41). For example, although a man who does not hug his crying wife may be interpreted as being unloving or unsupportive, he may simply be afraid to touch her. Hence, while the husband is communicating, his communication is not intentional, and therefore, is not symbolic. Nevertheless, his inactivity is important because it represents a social object to the wife which she will use to interpret him.

Miscommunications between people are a result of symbols being "arbitrarily associated with what they represent ... People create symbols, and they, not nature, designate that something shall stand for something else" (Charon, 1989:41). As Plummer (1975) elucidates, reality is both symbolic and subjective. Whereas it is symbolic because people "attach meaning to objects and actions in everyday life, to interpret the world... and to daily create social life", it is subjective because reality means something different to each person (Plummer, 1975:11). However, when symbols mean the same thing to both people in a situation, "symbols enable people to predict their own and other’s behavior and to anticipate the future course of interaction" (Stryker, 1980:37).

Perhaps the most obvious symbol is language itself. As Rock (1979:112-113) points out:
Phenomena could barely exist without language. Words prise objects out of the stream of immediate existence and award them structure and an enduring identity. By employing names to point to an entity, a man can put boundaries about it... Without a distinctive name, the entities would ... merge imperceptibly with what surrounds them ... (and) there would be no possibility of recalling or anticipating them.

What is more, language is at the heart of the inner conversation between the 'I' and the 'me,' and "man's ability to create, shape and support himself revolves around its possibilities" (Rock, 1979:115). In fact, the ability to create and manipulate symbols (as opposed to signs) through language is what sets people apart from lower animals (Plummer, 1975:11).

**Significant Others, Reference Groups and Perspectives**

By definition, significant others are those people who are important to the actor (Denzin, 1970:92). Charon (1989:68) adds that significant others are important "because their views of social objects are important to us, including, and especially, our view of our selves as social objects."

According to Denzin (1970:92), there are two types of significant others: role-specific, and orientational. Whereas the first type are "those important to the person in his

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Charon (1989:50) draws a distinction between symbols and signs by stating that, unlike symbols, signs "lead to an automatic response (and) are not arbitrary or conventional."
occupancy of specific roles and statuses\(^59\) (the other type are) those of general importance to him as a person" (Denzin, 1970:92).

Reference groups, on the other hand, are "groups the individual may belong to ... (including) social categories such as social class, ethnic group, or community ..." (Charon, 1989:24). As with the perspectives of significant others, the perspectives of each reference group are important to the individual, and contribute to the development of the individual's self (Charon, 1989:69). According to Charon (1989:23), these perspectives arise in interaction and guide the actor's definitions.

The significant other concept, specifically the role-specific type, is an important one in this study. The researcher will be focusing on the husband as the significant other. Depending on how much of a significant other the husband was to the woman, prior to the sexual assault incident, will help determine his potential of being a factor in her recovery from it. Within this context, both "role distance"\(^60\) and "role strain,"\(^61\) will also be looked at.

\(^{59}\) The difference between a status and a role is that, while a status is "a collection of rights and duties ... (a role) represents the dynamic aspect of status" (Linton, 1964:113-114). One example of the separation between roles and statuses are, whereas "wife" could be perceived as a status, cleaning and cooking are often a part of the wife's role.

\(^{60}\) According to Laurer and Handel (1977:81), Goffman (1961) defined "role distance" as "the gap between the obligations of the role and the individual's performance." For example, following the sexual assault, the "traditional" husband who rejects his wife may
THE ACTOR IN ACTION

By definition, "action is behavior to which a subjective meaning is attached" (Plummer, 1975:12). Everything that a person does is an act, and every act starts with the actor defining goals to him or her self and ends "with goals achieved, altered, or forgotten" (Charon, 1989:118-119).

Past experience, although not a predictor, plays an important role in how the individual will act. According to Mead (1964), situations that remind an individual of past experiences will likely cause the individual to act in the same way as before. These actions are almost always automatic and devoid of "consciousness of meaning" (Laurer and Handel, 1977:13). For example, it is an automatic reaction for many married couples to kiss one another before retiring to bed.

The couples in this study, however, were all placed in a situation in which little to no past experience existed. Only one couple had had to cope with the aftermath of a sexual assault before. Hence, Mead's explanation of how people act in situations, not previously encountered, is appropriate here.

According to Laurer and Handel (1977:14), Mead (1938)

no longer put money in their joint bank account, take out the garbage, or look after his wife's car repairs.

"Role strain is defined as "a feeling of difficulty or stress in fulfilling the demands of one's role obligations" (Theodorson and Theodorson, 1969:356). For example, a sexual assault victim may have difficulty fulfilling her traditional roles of wife and mother.
perceived the act to consist of four stages: "impulse, perception, manipulation, and consummation." Within the first stage, "consciousness of meaning" occurs. That is, the actor becomes aware that the object in the situation lacks definition and thus begins to think (Laurer and Handel, 1977:14).

Within the second stage, the individual actively responds to the situation by attempting to recall past experiences with similar objects. The individual then decides whether what he or she did in similar, past situations would work in the present situation (Laurer and Handel, 1977:15). This is called the ability to "see self in situation" (Charon, 1989:72).

Within the manipulation stage, the individual will continue to think and have difficulty defining the object until he or she finally acts and experiences the consequences of that action. The actor will then attempt to combine his or her tentative, prior definition of the event with the actual consequences experienced. The final stage results in "the emergence of a new, proven definition and the recession of meaning from consciousness" (Laurer and Handel, 1977:15).

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THE ACTOR IN INTERACTION

Interaction is closely connected to social action.

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62It is important to note that meaning results from the response that the actor makes to the situation, not from the event itself (Laurer and Handel, 1977:15).
Laurer and Handel (1977:41) define interaction as:

reciprocally influenced behavior on the part of two or more people. That is, when two people interact, each influences the behavior of the other, and each directs one's own behavior on the basis of the other's behavior towards one.

As pointed out earlier, interaction is the central concern of the symbolic interactionist perspective. As Charon (1989:155-156) explains, social interaction not only creates and defines symbols and social objects, including the self, but it creates and influences our minds, perspectives, and ability to role take. Hence, without interaction there would be no society, and without society there would be no individual.

The next section looks at the second theory used in this study, liberal feminism. Due to the fact that liberal feminism is used only to augment the Chicago School, only a brief overview of the theory is provided. To reiterate, the purpose of using this theory is simply to incorporate the two concepts of power and patriarchy into the Chicago School perspective.

**LIBERAL FEMINIST THEORY**

Contemporary liberal feminists, or liberal reformist feminists, as they are sometimes called, argue that

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63Abbott and Wallace (1990) refer to liberal feminists in this way.
women possess the same inalienable rights as men and are equally capable of rational thought as men. As a result, they argue that women are entitled to the same rights as men presently possess (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:213). The fact that women do not possess equal rights as men," they claim, is a result of sexual discrimination practices against women (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:213).

In Canada, the results of sexual discrimination practices are frequently pointed out by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. For example, it points to the fact that men overwhelmingly dominate the governing positions at both the federal and provincial levels (Torjman, 1988:7). In another example, the Council points to the fact that, over a year, full-time female employees earn "approximately 65 percent of what similarly employed men earn" (Lowe, 1989:4). On a similar note, it adds that female headed families "are 4.5 times more likely to be poor than families headed by men" (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987:11).

Liberal feminists argue that the cause of sexual discrimination against women is the socialization process (Abbott and Wallace, 1990:213). In her article, "Sex-Role Socialization: A Focus on Women," Lenore Weitzman (1984)

"The argument here specifically relates to the situation in western societies, such as, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.

"Abbott and Wallace (1990:213) define these as "certain restrictions ... placed on women as a group without regard to their own individual wishes, interest, abilities, and needs."
examines how the socialization process teaches males and females to behave differently.

According to Weitzman (1984:159), males and females learn different behaviors as a result of differential treatment. She argues that the process of differential treatment begins "from the minute a newborn baby girl is wrapped in a pink blanket and her brother in a blue one." Whereas female babies will begin to be treated as pretty, fragile, weak and small, male babies will be treated as larger, stronger, firmer, and even more alert (Weitzman, 1984:160). Once the child has reached age six, the child already recognizes his own sex and can differentiate between male and female roles (Weitzman, 1984:163).

According to Weitzman (1984:168), children learn early in the socialization process that males possess more power than females. Moreover, while feminists have made progress over the years to change this situation, power continues to maintain its dominant position between the sexes, especially between husbands and wives (Doyle, 1983:261).

**POWER AND PATRIARCHY**

Although there are many different types of power, power can be broadly defined as "one person’s ability to influence the behavior of another" (Peplau, 1984:102). Within marital relationships, husbands are likely to possess a combination

"...with current technology this process would begin even sooner."
of, at least, three kinds of power: Legitimate, expert and coercive. Whereas husbands derive legitimate power because the role of husband has traditionally provided men with authority over their wives, husbands derive expert power, generally speaking, through possessing greater knowledge in certain areas (mechanical, electrical, financial). In comparison, husbands derive coercive power via threats to use their superior strength or weapons\(^6\) (Doyle, 1983:262-263).

As a result of power differences between the sexes, men have traditionally been the creators and sustainers of reality. This is an important point because, according to Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (1992:352), whenever women take the role of the other, even if the other is a female, they cannot escape from seeing themselves "through the eyes of men."

The concept of power is implicit in the idea of patriarchy and patriarchal relations between the sexes. Gunn and Minch (1988:3) define patriarchy as follows:

Patriarchy refers to a gender-based differentiation of roles which becomes defined as a "natural" right of males to make decisions and monopolize positions of authority in society and its dominant institutions. This is not so much a deliberate, conscious effort on the part of males to control as it is a historically bound phenomenon in which women have been viewed as the property of men.

As a result of patriarchal relations, then, all females have

\(^6\)Weapons, in this sense of the word, could include the withdrawal of car privileges or even finances from the wife.
been relegated to an inferior status, a status that can be so limiting that "the idea of projecting their own plans onto the world becomes meaningless in all but theory" (Lengermann and Niebrugg-Brantley (1992:353).

Of even greater importance to this study, patriarchal relations between the sexes provides the social context in which males learn to sexual assault and in which males and females learn sexual assault myths. For example, one only has to read the newspapers to recognize the difference between how sexual assault victims are treated and how common assault victims are treated. That is, whereas it would be ludicrous to suggest that mugging victims prove they did not want to be beaten and have their money stolen, many "victims of rape and other forms of sexual assault do need to prove ... that they resisted, that they didn’t consent, that their will was overcome by overwhelming force and fear ..." (Brownmiller, 1975:431). Hence, as Diana Scully (1990:59) points out:

Learning includes not only behavioral techniques but also a host of values and beliefs, like rape myths, that are compatible with sexual aggression against women.

The insights of liberal feminist theorists, as outlined above, are important to an understanding of a husband’s reactions towards his wife. That is, the fact that males and females are raised in an atmosphere of male domination, where men learn to sexual assault and both sexes learn sexual assault myths, may explain why a husband would react
negatively towards his wife. For example, blaming her for the sexual assault, or treating her as "used goods." It would also explain why a woman's recovery, especially if her husband held a lot of power over her (and depending on the type of power), may be affected by his negative (or positive) reactions towards her. After all, if her own husband reacts negatively towards her, she may not only internalize those feelings, she may also be reluctant to turn to or even listen to anyone else.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter was divided into four sections: "Symbolic Interactionism and it's Varieties;" "Feminism and it's Varieties;" "The Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism;" and "Liberal Feminist Theory."

The first section served to introduce the two schools of thought within symbolic interactionism, the Iowa School and the Chicago School, and explained why the Chicago School was chosen as the principle perspective for this study.

Similarly, within the second section, the four main perspectives within Feminism were introduced and reasons were provided why liberal feminism was chosen to augment the theory of the Chicago School.

Within the fourth section, the author provided an overview of the central concepts and proposals of the Chicago School. Particular attention was paid to the "actor,"
"action" and "interaction" and the section was subsequently divided according to these ideas.

The final section provided a brief account of liberal feminism and explained why an understanding of power and patriarchy were necessary for the purposes of this study.

Having completed an overview of the theoretical perspectives, the next chapter looks at the methodology used in order to "get at" the social reality being studied. The relationship between theory and methodology is such that the primary theoretical perspective dictates the choice of methodology. In this case, the methodology that flows best from the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism is intensive interviewing. The purpose of the interview within the symbolic interactionist tradition is to explore and elicit detailed information from the interviewee to be later analyzed qualitatively.
METHODOLOGY

As outlined in the previous chapter, there are two divergent schools of thought within symbolic interactionism: The Chicago school and the Iowa school. Not only does each school contain a distinct set of assumptions about how the world works, but they each insist on opposing ways in which to study it. Whereas the Chicago school uses qualitative methods and stresses "the processual nature of reality," the Iowa school uses quantitative or "conventional sociological methods" (Laurer and Handel, 1977:171).

In any type of research, the methodology chosen must not only flow from the theoretical perspective, but must be able to "get at" the social reality being studied (Laurer and Handel, 1977:163). Since the main theoretical orientation of this study was the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism, qualitative methodology was utilized. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to review the qualitative methodology used in this study.

The chapter is divided into four sections: "The Varieties of Qualitative Methodology," "Gaining Access," "Data Collection and Organization," and "Possible Affects of Bias on Research Results." The first section addresses the varieties of qualitative methodology.

THE VARIETIES OF QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research "gets at" social reality using "the
data collection techniques of participant observation and/or intensive interviewing" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:1).

According to Lofland and Lofland (1984:12), participant observation:

refers to the process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that association.

For example, in one study headed by Howard Becker (1961), the daily activities of groups of medical students were recorded for up to a two month period (Laurer and Handel, 1977:169). In contrast, intensive or unstructured interviewing "is a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:12).

The data for this study was collected using intensive interviewing. The decision to interview participants was guided by two basic notions of symbolic interactionism: First, "that reality is process;" and second, "that social life can only be understood through an understanding of the perspectives of the actors" (Laurer and Handel, 1977:168). In order to examine the recovery process from sexual assault for a married woman, knowledge of her marriage relationship prior to and following the assault had to be gained. However,

attempting to acquire this knowledge through participant observation would have been an impossible task for one researcher. Hence, the only way to "get at" the reality of the recovery process was by conducting interviews that were retrospective in nature. Moreover, conducting intensive interviews with participants allowed the researcher to hear, first hand, what they had to say. This practice not only discouraged unnecessary interpreting by the researcher, but, it is hoped, will encourage a greater understanding of their perspectives.

The next section describes the process of gaining access.

GAINING ACCESS

Gaining access to couples proved to be the biggest obstacle to overcome for the researcher, and as gaining access became increasingly more difficult, so did the challenges of conducting ethically sound research and working within a reasonable budget and time frame. This section describes how access was obtained and the problems faced by the researcher in doing so.

69The reason that conducting ethically sound research became challenging was because after eight months of trying to gain access, the researcher had interviewed only three couples. Not only was the researcher running short of time and money, she was also running out of options. Feeling pressured and even somewhat desperate, there were moments the researcher considered "cutting corners."
THE ORIGINAL PLAN FOR GAINING ACCESS

Clearly, gaining access to couples as the victims are admitted to hospital emergency wards would have been the least costly and time-consuming of any method. Certainly it was the method most popularly employed by previous researchers (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1978; Sutherland and Scherl, 1970). However, attempting to interview victims who are in the midst of a crisis situation was not only perceived as unethical by the researcher, but extremely insensitive. It is little wonder that some victims were reportedly "outraged" by the presence of one research team (Holmstrom and Burgess, 1978:23). Hence, gaining access through hospitals was not seen as a viable option. Instead, the researcher chose the second most logical route; gaining access to couples through a crisis centre.

Having worked in crisis centres before, the researcher was confident she would be able to overcome any ethical concerns that a centre's director might have. Feeling secure with this knowledge, the researcher contacted the director of a large crisis centre and an interview was subsequently scheduled with her. At the meeting, the researcher summarized her proposal and provided a description of the couples she needed to interview. The meeting ended on a positive note and the director said that, although she could not state for certain whether she could grant access at that time, she would look through her files to see if there were any victims who,
at least, fit the necessary criteria.

In a later telephone conversation with the director, the researcher was left with a strong impression that access would not be a problem. In fact, the director stated that her centre was in the process of initiating a program for sexual assault victims and their significant others. After the researcher proposed her thesis she learned that, not only did the director not have any current couples available to interview, but that she deemed it unethical to contact clients who had gone through her centre in the past. The director explained that to do so could put sexual assault victims back into a crisis situation. In addition, the director apologized for having misinformed the researcher about the subject matter of her new program. The program was to service direct and indirect victims of incest and sexual abuse, not victims of sexual assault.

At this point, the researcher was told she had three options: Change the focus of her topic to the aftermath of sexual abuse and begin interviewing almost immediately; attempt to gain access by contacting other crisis centres; or attempt to gain access through newspaper advertisements. Having decided to continue with the original topic, the researcher began to exhaust her options. Eventually, three couples were obtained through newspaper advertisements, one couple through a crisis centre, and one couple through a
Canadian talk show.  

**GAINING ACCESS THROUGH NEWSPAPERS**

Over a period of six months, the researcher ran advertisements in selected regions throughout Northern and Southern Ontario (see Appendix A). Due to monetary and transportation concerns, newspapers were chosen on the basis of their proximity to both the researcher’s permanent residence and semi-permanent residence. In total, 25 advertisements were run, 15 in Southern Ontario and 10 in Northern Ontario. The advertisements ran in eight different newspapers on both a weekly and weekend basis. Depending on such things as the size of the newspaper, the length of time the advertisement was run and the size of the print, advertisement costs ranged from $5.00 to $160.00.

**THE HIDDEN COSTS OF NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING**

To the researcher, common sense dictated that in order to get people to respond to the advertisements, especially ones of such an intimate nature, she would have to make responding as easy as possible. Since having people write to a box

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Gaining access was also attempted through wife abuse clinics, legal offices, family counselling services/psychologists, local bulletin boards, speaking in front of university classes, general word of mouth and local newspaper journalists (the researcher offered a copy of her eventual research findings in return for newspaper coverage).
number was considered time consuming and bothersome,\(^7\) the researcher left her first name, telephone number, and when long distance applied, encouraged people to call collect. Consequently, however, the researcher discovered that advertising involved not only the obvious cost of printing, but additional costs as well, both monetary and otherwise.

Additional monetary costs were a result of people charging their calls to the researcher's telephone number. Considering that nearly half of all respondents called collect, and that the average telephone call lasted approximately 15 minutes, this proved to be quite expensive.

By "going out on a limb," so to speak, and leaving her first name, the researcher believed that people would be encouraged to trust her. On the other hand, since the researcher's name is often considered a female one, this also left her open to obscene phone calls. These calls were frequent and usually occurred late in the evening.

Having a part-time job was also problematic because the researcher was not always available to answer the telephone. Although the researcher used an answering machine, respondents rarely left their names and telephone numbers at which to be reached. Moreover, although some callers left their first names, dates and times when they would call back, this

\(^7\)In only one advertisement was a box number used and that was at the insistence of the newspaper's advertising department. Although the advertisement ran for three days, there were no responses.
occurrence proved not only disruptive, but was frustrating when they did not do so.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A TELEPHONE CHECKLIST

Following the first set of calls from respondents, it quickly became apparent to the researcher that her answering method required fine tuning. Although conversations went well during regular hours, the researcher found herself unprepared for callers after 12:00 in the evening, a surprisingly popular time. Therefore, in the form of a telephone checklist, the researcher wrote down how she would initiate conversations as well as all issues that needed to be clarified. The method was rehearsed several times to prevent the words from sounding stilted or that they were being read. This method proved simple, convenient and worked very well. Hence, the researcher made it a practice to use it with all respondents.

After a caller made it clear he or she was calling in response to an advertisement, the researcher stated the following:

"Thank-you so much for answering my advertisement. I was concerned that no one would respond because the topic is such a difficult one for people to talk about. You have shown a great deal of courage by even calling. Although I’m not a victim myself, I spent four months training to be a counsellor at the

72After apologising for calling so late, people usually offered one of the following explanations: "I just got home from a late shift;" "I couldn’t get the kids to bed any earlier;" "I had to wait until my husband/wife fell asleep;" "I had to wait until my husband/wife left for work;" or "I wasn’t going to call but I couldn’t sleep until I did."

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Sexual Assault Crisis Centre in Sudbury, so I have some idea of what you must be going through right now. Are you calling on behalf of yourself or perhaps someone close to you?"

At this point, the caller would either ask questions concerning the thesis or relate the sexual assault incident. It usually became apparent within the first moments of the conversation whether or not the caller’s situation fit the desired criteria of the thesis. When it was not clear, however, the researcher would inform the caller of the criteria in a form similar to the following:

Thank-you for sharing that with me. However, I’m not certain from your description whether you fit the requirements of my thesis. My thesis has such a narrow focus and it has been difficult to find couples who fit its criteria. I’m looking to interview couples wherein: First, the woman has been sexually assaulted by a stranger or someone only slightly known to her; second, the woman was married or living common-law, either at the time of the assault or at the time of remembering a sexual assault experience; and third, the sexual assault involved some form of intercourse.

Once it was confirmed the caller did fit the criteria and that both the husband and wife would consent to an interview, the researcher provided the couple with details of

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7When it became clear that the caller’s situation did not fit the researcher’s criteria, the researcher was cautious not to end the conversation too abruptly. In addition, if the researcher sensed the caller was really asking for help, the researcher offered to mail a sexual assault information package and provide the phone number to the crisis centre nearest the caller.
the interview process using the following checklist: 74

1) Inform the couple that each person will be interviewed separately to ensure that the interviewee will not be influenced by the presence of his/her spouse;

2) Give an approximation of how long each interview will last (1 hour for females and 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) hour for males);

3) Inform the couple that the interview will be taped, for the sake of convenience, and that additional notes will be taken;

4) Inform the couple of the need to sign consent forms;

5) Inform the couple that their names will remain confidential, unless otherwise specified, and that coded names will be used;

6) Inform the couple that the contents of the interview must remain confidential until both have been interviewed;

7) Inform the couple that I will not "take the data and run," but that they are welcome to see the finished product or have a copy for their own use;

8) Ask the couple where they would both feel comfortable being interviewed. If they request their home/apartment: a) make sure interviews can be done in a room out of earshot of his/her spouse; b) make sure there is an outlet for the tape recorder; c) request to be accompanied by an uninvolved, male designated driver, and ask if there is a separate room in which he could sit and read;

9) Set up an interview schedule for the husband and wife;

10) Ask for directions and a name and number to call in case of any problems;

11) Ask if they have any questions of their own.

74 This check-list was also used when the researcher spoke with those participants who were not obtained through newspaper advertisements.
THE RESPONDENTS

Approximately 30 people responded to the newspaper advertisements. There were various reasons for these responses. For example, some wanted to know more about the study and why the researcher was conducting it. Others stated they were also writing about sexual assault and just wanted to show their support. One man even called to complain about his wife charging him with sexual assault. Most, however, showed interest in participating in the study.

Of the males who showed interest (n=7), 75 each stated he was calling on behalf of either his wife or his girlfriend. The men were concerned that their female partners were recovering poorly from being sexually assaulted and that, as a result, their relationships were falling apart. The men complained that their partners refused to seek counselling and that they felt helpless. They also made it clear that their partners were either unaware or against them calling. 76

Of the females who were interested (n=14), only half had discussed the possibility of participating with their husbands (or boyfriends) prior to calling. One woman stated her

75 This finding was surprising in light of previous research strongly pointing to men's reluctance to talk about intimate details of their lives (McGill, 1985).

76 Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to interview any of these couples; either the females refused to consent to an interview, or the couples did not meet the criteria required for the study.
husband did not even know she was a sexual assault victim. Most women emphasized how difficult it was for them to call. Some claimed they, literally, agonized over whether or not to call for hours; they wanted to help, but they were hesitant to re-erect hard feelings. On the other hand, others felt talking about the aftermath of their sexual assaults would be therapeutic.

GAINING ACCESS THROUGH CRISIS CENTRES

Altogether, the researcher contacted the directors of 11 crisis centres throughout Ontario and Detroit, Michigan.⁷ The researcher initiated contact with each director by telephone followed by a formal letter requesting access (see Appendix B and C). Due to monetary and transportation concerns, crisis centres were chosen on the basis of their proximity to both the researcher’s permanent residence and semi-permanent residence.

The researcher received mixed responses from crisis centre directors. Whereas most (n=6) responded positively to the research topic and were supportive, other directors (n=5) expressed the view that the researcher was wasting her time focusing on the husband’s reactions. Ironically, one director stated that, in her experience, the husband caused the majority of problems for the sexual assault victim. The

⁷Of the crisis centres contacted, six were members of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres.
director's negative attitude towards the topic remained unaltered even after the researcher explained that that was the reason the study was being conducted.\(^7\)

Although access was granted in all but three cases,\(^9\) only one crisis centre was able to provide a couple who met the requirements of the study.

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GAINING ACCESS THROUGH A CANADIAN TALK SHOW

On 16 March, 1992, Shirley Solomon hosted a talk show entitled, "Husbands of Rape Victims." Although network personnel were unable to provide the researcher with the telephone number of one of the couples who had appeared on the show, they were able to provide the couple with the researcher's telephone number. However, not having received a phone call from the couple, the researcher attempted to contact them.

Based on the information found in the show's transcript, the researcher knew only that the victim had been found and hospitalized in Brantford (CTV Television Network, 1992:2).

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\(^7\)The attitudes expressed by the directors of certain crisis centres were alarming. It appears that some crisis centres have lost sight that socialization is at the heart of the assault victim's problems and not husbands, or men, in general. Hence, rather than being part of the solution and facilitating the victim's recovery, the researcher believes these crisis centres have become part of the problem.

\(^9\)One director simply stated she was unable to help me. The other directors stated that although they knew of couples who fit the criteria of the study, they were unwilling to risk putting the couples back into a crisis situation.
After numerous attempts, the researcher was eventually able to locate the couple in St. Catherines.

DATA COLLECTION AND ORGANIZATION

This section outlines how information was collected and organized for this study. Many of the strategies employed throughout the data collection and data organization processes, were patterned after the advice of Kirby and McKenna (1989), in their account, Experience Research Social Change: Methods From the Margins. The first topic addresses from whom information was sought.

THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Although information was gathered from a variety of sources, the primary source of information came from those who participated. This study was based on the experiences of five couples. However, because one male refused to be interviewed, interviews were conducted with only nine participants. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, it is understandable that this should happen. Moreover, as Labovitz and Hagedorn (1981:20) point out, since those who refuse to

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80Through telephone conversations with sexual assault victims and their spouses, as well as through an informal interview with Susan Shannon James, the researcher was able to acquire important information.

81Despite his refusal to participate in the study, the researcher was able to acquire important information through three telephone conversations with him.
participate are different from the participants, "if we base our generalizations solely on those who are willing to be studied, we are likely to overgeneralize (going beyond the data)."

Each of the couples had the following four characteristics in common: Couples were married; the females were victims of sexual assault; accosters were unknown to the victims; and the assaults either occurred or were remembered during the time of the relationship.

MARRIAGE: DEFINED

For the purposes of this study, marriage was broadly defined as the extended cohabitation of an unrelated male and female in a single dwelling. As such, being married included common law living arrangements.\(^2\)

Married couples were chosen, as opposed to unmarried couples, because it is the researcher's belief that few relationships are closer than that of husband and wife; not only strengthened over time by love, but by living together, there is a greater likelihood of the couple understanding and remaining loyal to one another. Hence, because there is more at stake, a married couple is less likely to dissolve their relationship in troubled times than would an unmarried couple.

Moreover, in contrast to single women, married women are

\(^2\)It is for this reason that when interviewing, the researcher referred to the participant's partner as either a husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend.
unlikely to be virgins. According to Rose (1986:822), this is
an important distinction because "when the victim is a virgin
and virginity has been highly valued as part of the person's
identity and culture, feelings of being ruined and dirty are
intensified."

**SEXUAL ASSAULT: DEFINED**

The definition of sexual assault utilized in this study
was forced, unwanted intercourse, either penile-vaginal or
penile-anal in nature, performed with or without the use of a
weapon, on a female, regardless of her mental state or
condition at the time, by a stranger or group of strangers.
The reason that the sexual assault must have involved the
victim's primary sexual organs is because the likelihood of
the woman experiencing extended traumatization is greater than
if only the secondary sexual organs had been involved.
Moreover, sexual assaults involving either vaginal or anal
intercourse are more likely to elicit a stronger reaction in
the husband than would other forms of sexual assault.

**STRANGER: DEFINED**

In this study, a stranger was defined as "someone not
known to the victim, or known only by sight. Everyone else
(was) considered an acquaintance" (Karmen, 1984:114). The
stipulation that the victim not know her attacker/s was
important for three reasons. First, in cases where the
assailant is known to the victim, the victim is more likely to believe she somehow precipitated the sexual assault (Herman, 1984:34). The stipulation that victims not know their assailant/s lessened this possibility.

The second reason for this stipulation was that sexual assaults by a stranger are generally perceived by everyone as both serious and "real" (Gunn and Minch, 1988:47). By insisting that the attacker/s not know the victim, the researcher believed that the husband would be less likely to accuse his wife of having precipitated the sexual assault and thus enable the researcher to get at other issues.

The third reason for this stipulation was that the researcher believed she would have a better chance of interviewing women sexually assaulted by strangers than by those known to them. As pointed out earlier, certain studies have shown the greater likelihood of stranger sexual assaults being reported, and thus talked about, than sexual assaults by family members and acquaintances (Gunn and Minch, 1988:47).

THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OCCURRENCE

The stipulation that the assault either occur or be remembered during the time of the relationship was an important one. This allowed the researcher to obtain a less biased explanation of how the female had changed as a result of the assault and/or the assault memory, and of how much of
a help or hindrance her partner had been during her recovery. Although "suddenly" remembering a sexual assault experience is somewhat unusual, it is no less traumatic for a woman and her spouse to deal with. According to McCahill, Meyer and Fischman (1979:24), "the child victim who appears to have come away from the incident with no immediate difficulties may be in store for far more serious problems years later." As a result, the researcher was able to collect data as rich from these participants and their spouses as she was from others.

THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Information for this study was attained through guided, unstructured interviews with participants (see Appendix D and E). By definition, unstructured interviewing "seeks to discover the informant’s experience of a particular topic or situation" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:12). In contrast, the

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83For the most part, the state of the woman’s recovery was based on the couple’s combined assessment of how she had changed since the sexual assault. Hence, although a complete recovery represented a return to pre-sexual assault behavior, this did not negate the possibility of the woman’s recovery surpassing her pre-sexual assault behavior.

84While some women do remember suddenly, for others, memories return only gradually.

85Interviews were guided in the sense that the participant’s experience and openness often dictated how questions were asked and whether additional questions were necessary to ask. With respect to how questions were asked, for example, in those cases where the victim had suppressed the sexual assault memory, questions 18, 24b and 24c of Appendix D, and questions 7, 15b and 15c of Appendix E were either not asked or reworded.
goal of structured interviewing "is to elicit choices between alternative answers to preformed questions on a topic or situation" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:12).

Due to the contributions of a non-participating sexual assault victim, interview questions remained focused on the primary research question: To what extent do the husband’s reactions to his wife being sexually assaulted, help or hinder her recovery from the assault? The questions followed a logical sequence of topics and were organized from the least to the most sensitive in nature.

THE INTERVIEW SETTING

According to Kirby and McKenna (1989:100), when "seeking information about sensitive, perhaps emotional topics, a safe and supportive environment is critical." Since sexual assault was both a sensitive and an emotional topic for participants, the researcher did not discourage having interviews conducted at their homes. As one source points out, "homes are reflections and extensions of oneself -- nests as well as castles" (Karmen, 1984:36). However, in order to ensure her own safety, the researcher requested that she be accompanied by an uninvolved, male designated driver. Altogether, two participants were interviewed in an office setting, five at

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6After the researcher had formulated her interview guide, Susan Shannon James (1992), a married sexual assault victim, herself, provided constructive criticism on its content and suggested additional questions to ask research participants.
their homes, and two at a relative's home.

**THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

With few exceptions, the formalities preceding the actual interviews were as follows: Upon arriving at the interview location, introductions were made and, when requested, the researcher and driver produced their identification and proof that the research was being conducted for the researcher's degree. Having brought either coffee or donuts, the researcher presented these to her hosts in order to avoid having them feel they should entertain. The researcher and driver were then escorted into separate rooms and the researcher began preparing for her first interview. The preparation included setting up the tape recorder, accessing the appropriate research instrument, consent form, note pad and a writing instrument.

Each interview began with both the researcher and the participant signing a consent form (see Appendix F). Interviews were taped and notes were taken on a question by question basis. Moreover, since getting at the data involves more than simply "listening and asking" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984:47), additional notes were taken describing the body language and general demeanour of the interviewee. These notes were taken in order to separate what the interviewee was
saying from what may actually have been implied.\(^7\)

Although the researcher encouraged participants to provide detailed answers to questions, short answers were occasionally given. When this happened, the researcher gently probed the participant for a more complete answer. Examples of probes included: "Could you explain why that happened?" or "You stated earlier______; what did you mean by that?"

When it was possible, the researcher interviewed the wife first and then the husband. Following each interview, especially ones that were emotionally upsetting, the researcher spent time "debriefing" the participant. By attempting to calm the participant down and change the focus of the conversation, the researcher hoped to avoid putting the participant back into a crisis situation. Altogether, interviews with female participants lasted from 30 minutes to 120 minutes and interviews with male participants lasted from 30 minutes to 80 minutes.\(^8\)

In most cases, contact between the researcher and her research participants did not end with the interviews. Not

\(^7\)For example, taking notes guarded against the possibility of the researcher interpreting sarcastic statements as literal statements.

\(^8\)There were many reasons for variations in the time spent interviewing participants. Lengthy interviews were usually a result of participants working through their emotions. For example, during one interview, a participant became so emotional that the researcher stopped recording until he had regained his composure. In contrast, shorter interviews were a result of participants either feeling shy and embarrassed, or having had so much time to reflect previously that they did not even have to think about their answers.
only were follow-up calls made whenever necessary, but upon request, a copy of the completed research was sent to each couple.

**GUARANTEEING ANONYMITY**

For the majority of participants in this study, the guarantee of anonymity was a required condition of their involvement; while some participants held prestigious positions and simply wished their identities to remain confidential, others were under court order not to talk about their situations.\(^9\) To protect their identities, the researcher used coded names in place of their real names and provided only general information regarding their chosen occupations.

**KEEPING TRACK OF THE DATA**

Towards the early stages of data collection, the researcher realized that organization was the key to avoid being overwhelmed by the sheer mass of the data. Organization was maintained by keeping records of all information obtained throughout the research process. After information was recorded, it was placed into appropriate files and kept inside a "portable file" box. Altogether, five files were created. Within the first file, marked "Bibliography," the

\(^9\)In only one case did a couple insist that their identity be revealed.
The researcher kept a list of the authors, books and articles she planned to access. These were gathered at the suggestion of friends and acquaintances, directors of crisis centres, those responding to newspaper advertisements and by reading other sources.

The second file, entitled "Methodology," was divided into two sections: One section was used to keep track of expenditures, such as advertising, telephone calls, travelling, meals and miscellaneous items. In the other section, the researcher wrote down the daily problems she faced in gaining access. Each entry was dated and the researcher noted the names and, whenever possible, the phone numbers of every person she spoke with.

The third file, called "Correspondence," consisted of all the letters sent and received by the researcher. The researcher also stored her advertisements in this file.

The fourth file was marked "Interviews." This file contained the notes from each interview, along with a copy of each interview, fully transcribed and paginated. At the back of this file, the researcher kept signed consent forms.

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90Each set of notes included a list of all the events preceding an interview, as well as, personal observations made during an interview.

91Although the majority of each interview was transcribed verbatim, some answers were summarized. When necessary, the researcher simply referred back to the tape. During this process, the researcher conducted some analyzing by recording her thoughts and perceptions as they occurred. However, in doing so, she was careful to acknowledge that those words belonged to her and not the interviewee.
and an identity chart. The chart listed the name, telephone number and address of each research participant, along with the date of his or her interview. When necessary, the chart also included the coded names and numbers of participants. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Real Name</th>
<th>Telephone Number/ Address</th>
<th>Code Name/ Spouse</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Sandie Bellows-Dewolfe</td>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td>&quot;Edna/John&quot; 20/11/91</td>
<td>Greg Dewolfe 17/05/92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth file, "Pre-data Analysis," contained 10 categories, and was used to store pre-analyzed data. Details of this procedure are explained in the following.

After each interview had been transcribed, the researcher blanked out the names of all people mentioned throughout and replaced them with appropriate substitutes. For example, names of spouses were replaced with either "my husband" or "my wife." Every line was then numbered and direct quotes were underlined in order to distinguish between quotations and summations.

Following the preparatory work, the researcher extracted the themes embodied in each interview and summarized them. Themes that were a pattern with more than one couple, called categories, were compiled. Altogether, 10 broad categories were created. Examples of categories included, "Pre-Assault Relationship," "Post-Assault Relationship," "Recovery From the Assault," "Religion" and "Drug Abuse."

A separate section was set aside for each category in the
"Pre-data Analysis" file. Within each section, the researcher recorded the participant’s code name and number, the page number, line number and a brief summary of what was said. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code #</th>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Page #</th>
<th>Line #</th>
<th>Brief Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Edna</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29-31</td>
<td>She told her husband last night that she doesn't have to think about her accoster any more.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information for the "Pre-data Analysis" file was gathered prior to the researcher conducting a comprehensive review of the literature and served two important purposes. First, it allowed the researcher the opportunity to get to know her data, well, without being prejudiced by what other researchers had found. As a result, the researcher ensured that the voices of her participants would be given priority, and not those of previous researchers. Secondly, it proved useful in the actual analysis of the data.

ANALYZING THE DATA

In order to meet the goals of this study, the researcher utilized the diagram found in Joel Charon’s (1989) account, *Symbolic Interactionism: An Introduction, an Interpretation.*
an Integration,\textsuperscript{2} to analyze her data. Charon's (1989) diagram, which illustrates how an actor enters, defines, acts in, and then redefines a situation, was divided into three stages (see Figure 4-1).

The first stage represented the actor's covert reactions. Within this stage, the researcher examined the actor's interpretation of the pre-marital relationship, as well as, the actor's acknowledgement and interpretation of the sexual assault. That is, who the actor saw as the victim/s and who the actor held accountable for the sexual assault.

The second stage represented the actor's initial, overt reactions to the sexual assault occurrence. Here, the researcher articulated the verbal and behavioral reactions of the actor, both to the sexual assault and to his or her significant other.

The third stage represented the actor's secondary overt reactions. Within this stage, the researcher examined the negative repercussions from the actor's initial overt reactions and whether, as a result, the actor appeared to modify his or her definition of the situation. Within this stage, the researcher also looked at how, if at all, the husband's overall reactions affected his wife's recovery from her sexual assault.

The researcher completed the information found on Figure 4-1 for both the male and female participants.

\textsuperscript{2}See specifically, Figure 10-1, page 154.
FIGURE 4-1

STAGE ONE: (complete with self, mind, significant others, reference groups, interests, symbols, goals, past experiences and perspectives)

ENTERS AND DEFINES THE SITUATION TO HIM/HER SELF

STAGE TWO: THE ACTOR THEN MAKES A DECISION ON HOW TO ACT TOWARD OBJECTS IN THE SITUATION AND DECIDES ON LINE OF ACTION (includes other actors)

ACTOR ACTS OVERTLY (This is a social act if others are present in the situation)

STAGE THREE:

Meaning is given to the actor's overt act by others in the situation according to their perspective, and define the situation according to their goals (includes taking role of others)

Others act overtly (social acts)

ACTOR INTERPRETS OTHERS ACTS AND ASSESSES OWN ACTS BASED ON ACTS OF OTHERS

ACTOR REVISES PERSPECTIVE AND DEFINITION OF THE SITUATION

ACTOR MAKES A DECISION AND ACTS

THE DIRECTION OF THE STREAM OF ACTION IS INFLUENCED
POSSIBLE AFFECTS OF BIAS ON RESEARCH RESULTS

In any type of research one cannot rule out the possibility, if not the inevitability, of biases slipping in and affecting the research results. This research was no exception. Hence, the following acknowledges the potential of four types of biases having existed in this study.

SAMPLING BIAS

The first type of bias to be noted is in regards to sampling. As Denzin (1970) points out, in order for a selected population sample to be inferentially sound, it must "mirror as perfectly as possible the population" (Denzin, 1970:85). Although there are no available statistics to provide a cross section of married couples in which the female had been the victim of a stranger sexual assault, due to the sampling process, it is still unlikely that the sample was inferentially sound. That is, since gaining access to the majority of participants required the use of newspaper advertisements, participants had to contact the researcher. In addition, because of the shortage of available participants, every couple who was willing and fit the necessary characteristics, was accepted. As a result, the present sample is unrepresentative of couples such as non-whites and couples who eventually split up.
THE HAWTHORNE EFFECT

The second type of bias is commonly known as the "Hawthorne effect." This bias occurs when subjects respond "to the mere fact of being the objects of attention rather than to variables manipulated by the researcher" (Lauer and Handel, 1977:164).

Although the Hawthorne effect was originally attributed to the presence of researchers in an experimental type situation, the presence of a researcher in any research situation "may have effects upon the subjects that are hard to differentiate from other effects" (Lauer and Handel, 1977:164). Subsequently, the researcher's attempt to guard against any inconsistencies between what subjects were saying and what they actually meant (for example, by interpreting their body language or pauses in speech), may have proved a futile effort. There is the distinct possibility that the participant could have been reacting to the presence of a stranger asking personal questions rather than to the personal nature of the questions themselves. It is for this reason that, in the final analysis, far less attention was paid to body language than to what was actually verbalized.

THE EXPERIMENTER BIAS

The final two biases to be looked at, the "experimenter

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bias" and the "experimenter effect" are better known as the "Rosenthal effect" or the "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Lauer and Handel, 1977:165). According to Lauer and Handel (1977:165), the experimenter bias "refers to the fact that when an experimenter has an expectation concerning the performance of the subjects, their performance will be influenced in the direction of that expectation." As such, because the male subjects interviewed were aware of the researcher's objective -- to find out how well or poorly they affected their spouse's recoveries from sexual assault -- their responses could have been slanted to make them appear in a more positive light than was actually the case.

Similarly, it is possible that female participants could have slanted their answers depending on the degree they perceived the researcher to be threatening or judgmental in regards to their sexual assault experience. Few lend credit to this argument better than Susan Brownmiller (1975):

The insecurity of women runs so deep that many, possibly most, rape victims agonize afterward in an effort to uncover what it was in their behavior, their manner, their dress that triggered this awful act against them. (Brownmiller, 1975:347)

Subsequently, if a female participant had ever questioned whether or not having precipitated her sexual assault, it

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For a more thorough explanation of this phenomena see the following: Rosenthal, Robert. 1966. Experimenter Effects in Behavior Research (New York: Century-Crofts).
would seem likely that any fear or suspicion of being judged likewise, by the researcher, could restrict her answers to certain questions.

In an attempt to negate the potential impact of the experimenter bias, prior to each interview, the researcher emphasized her researcher role to exist in an objective and nonjudgemental capacity. As well, the researcher also emphasized that the participant's experience (accomplishments as well as mistakes) could benefit others in a similar situation.

THE EXPERIMENTER EFFECT

The experimenter effect "refers to the fact that different experimenters obtain different results from experiments using comparable subjects" (Lauer and Handel, 1977:165). As Lauer and Handel (1977:166-167) point out, previous research has shown that ascribed and achieved status\(^5\) differences between researcher and subject can impact on the subject's responses to questions. Hence, the fact that the researcher was young, female, and a student, may have affected the responses given by males, older participants,

\(^5\)Theodorson and Theodorson (1969:416) define ascribed status as that which is either inherited at birth or automatically acquired later in life. Examples include race, age, sex, and occasionally occupations. In contrast, they define achieved status as that which must be earned or competed for. For this reason, an occupation is generally considered to be an achieved status.
professionals and even those who were not as well educated."

By way of explanation, interviews involving males, older participants and professionals could be classified as "interviewing up," while those involving less educated participants could be classified as "interviewing down." As Kirby and McKenna (1989:67) explain, these phenomena occur when either the interviewee or the interviewer, respectively, has or assumes to have greater authority than the other. In other words, it is a matter of a power differential. For example, in one situation involving an older and well-educated male participant, the researcher received the distinct impression she was "interviewing up" after being told:

I think it would have occurred to anybody in my position ... certainly anybody with an ounce of knowledge of psychology or background in reading into some of these cases, and things like that. It probably would have occurred to you immediately.

The researcher made every attempt to lessen the experimenter effect by maintaining a friendly but professional attitude with each participant. Such a combination of professionalism and amicability was regarded as the most appropriate behavior for establishing what Kirby and McKenna (1989:67) term a "level playing field."

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Moreover, in the advertisements as well as in the telephone conversation prior to each interview, the researcher emphasized her previous counsellor training. It can not be emphasized enough that, in the majority of cases, this was the deciding factor for subjects having agreed to an interview in the first place. In fact, many stated outright that they had nothing to lose by talking to the researcher. Put another way, they believed that talking about their problems would be somewhat of a liberating experience for them.

SUMMARY

This chapter was divided into four sections: "The Varieties of Qualitative Methodology," "Gaining Access," "Data Collection and Organization," and "Possible Affects of Bias on Research Results." Within the first section the varieties of qualitative methodology were explained and reasons were provided as to why intensive interviewing was chosen.

The second section described how access to participants was eventually obtained and the problems encountered by the researcher in doing so. The two primary problems included, first, "getting past" directors of crisis centres who, sometimes, were over-protective of their clients, and second, attempting to find participants who fit the necessary criteria of the study.

The third section outlined how information was collected and later organized for analysis. Although information for
the study was obtained from a variety of sources, the primary source of information was gathered from the actual participants.

The final section acknowledged the potential of four types of biases affecting the research results and the methods employed by the researcher in her attempt to lessen them. These biases included a sampling bias, the "Hawthorne Effect," the "Experimenter Bias" and the "Experimenter Effect."

Having completed an overview of the qualitative methodology utilized, the next chapter serves as an introduction to the data analysis. It summarizes the data obtained from interviews by providing a demographical overview of the couples involved, as well as, a descriptive account of the sexual assault incidents.
The Data

We call them psychotic. We disbelieve. We tell ourselves the facts may never exactly be determined: one can I suppose, make up such horrible stories, but it takes an awful lot to shatter a soul, this shattering one cannot feign.
(S Steele, 1987:22)

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize readers with the couples involved in this study. The chapter provides both an overview of the couples, as well as, a descriptive account of the sexual assault incidents. Each account is starkly genuine -- not a story. In fact, when the researcher naively thanked one of the participants for having related her story, she was firmly told: "But it's not a story. It's life. It's real life. As they say on T.S.N., 'it's real life, real action, real drama'" (Sandie Bellows, 1992).

DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

In terms of age, the couples in this study were fairly heterogeneous in nature. One couple was in their fifties, another couple was in their forties, one couple was in their thirties and two couples were in their twenties.

The length of time each couple had been together also varied. Whereas the two oldest couples had been married the longest, 27 years and 21 years, respectively, the one couple in their thirties had been married 4 years. In contrast, both
of the couples in their twenties had consensual living arrangements. In each of these cases, the couple had seen one another for more than three years and, in one case, the couple was engaged.

Four of the couples in this study shared in the responsibilities of raising, at least, one child together. At the time of their interviews, the one couple, without children, was awaiting the birth of a baby boy. Out of those couples with children, two were raising children as a result of previous relationships. However, none of the children were a result of any of the sexual assaults discussed in this study.

In regard to social class, it is likely that some disparity existed between the couples, at least in terms of combined income, educational levels, occupations and status. Individually, male participants occupied such positions as university professor, carpenter, civil engineer and university student. In contrast, female participants occupied positions such as homemaker, teacher, collections clerk and university student.

With respect to religious affiliation, three of the couples were Roman Catholic and two were Protestant. Two of the participants, in particular, described themselves as "very religious."

Regarding ethnicity, all of the couples in this study were white and predominantly English-speaking. Individual
ethnic backgrounds included Ukranian, Irish, Polish, German, Swiss, Belgian and Maltese.

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULTS

Out of the five women who participated in this study, three had been sexually assaulted during the course of their relationships. In one case, the sexual assault occurred 19 years into the woman’s relationship. The other two sexual assaults occurred between 2 to 3 years into the women’s relationships.

In contrast, two participants had been sexually assaulted in their youths and had suppressed the memories for years. Whereas one had been sexually assaulted at age 10 and began recalling the incident 17 years into her relationship,\textsuperscript{97} the other had been sexually assaulted at 14 and suddenly remembered the incident 6 months into her’s.\textsuperscript{98}

With respect to form, two women were the victims of "individual rapes," two were the victims of "multiple rapes" and one was the victim of a "pair rape." In addition, and to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, each of these sexual assaults involved a single, primary victim and was of an

\textsuperscript{97}In this case, the woman had suppressed the sexual assault memory for 32 years. Memories of the assault began returning after undergoing a procedure in a doctor’s office that closely paralleled her assault experience.

\textsuperscript{98}In this case, the woman had suppressed memories of her sexual assault for 11 years. Sudden recollection of the assault occurred during a movie depicting a sexual assault scenario that closely paralleled her own.
intraracial nature.

In regard to spontaneity, it is likely that four of the sexual assaults had been fully planned while only one had been partially planned. In the latter case, although the accoster had fully planned his attack, he informed the victim that he had actually been waiting for a different woman. He stated she had simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

With respect to the accoster’s style of attack, three of the women were victims of "blitz rapes," while two were the victims of "confidence rapes." Each of the victim’s accounts are briefly described in the following.

**FIRST VICTIM**

While sitting alone in her apartment one evening, "Leslie" thought she heard people’s voices outside her door. Assuming they were her friends, she was not alarmed when she heard people walk in. She was suddenly grabbed by two men who then used a knife to sexually assault her. The victim suffered severe bruising and knife wounds to both legs.

**SECOND VICTIM**

"Marg" was sexually assaulted by four men in the army. At the time of the assault, she, herself, was taking army training courses. Using a bowing knife, and high on marihuana, her accosters sexually assaulted her over a period of seven hours. The victim received six fractured ribs, a fractured

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Although the facts seen to point to the conclusion that all five sexual assaults had been fully planned, it is possible that this may not have been true in one of the victim’s cases. She, like the victim to follow, may simply have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.
checkbone and a concussion. The concussion was a result of a severe blow to the victim's head, presumably by either a rock or a log. The victim suppressed the memory of this assault for 11 years.

THIRD VICTIM

While on her lunch break, Sandie was suddenly attacked and kidnapped by a man wielding a screwdriver. Unknown to her at the time, her accoster was Peter John Peters, a man who had already "murdered an elderly man, and ... brutally raped and murdered a 25 year old woman" (CTV Television Network, 1992:1). The kidnapping occurred in a public parking lot in front of three witnesses. Using her car, they drove into the country where he sexually assaulted her. The victim suffered severe internal and external bruising, a broken jaw and multiple stab wounds.

FOURTH VICTIM

"Edna" first came upon her accoster in a lookout, a place that had always held her curiosity due to the carvings on its stone walls. Although she had wanted him to leave so she could investigate it alone, he said that if she waited fifteen minutes, he would come back and teach her about the lookout's history. When the man returned, he had a knife and a belt. He used the belt to tie her to him. With the knife, he made a motion in the air that he would cut her throat if she yelled. Having no alternative, she was forced to comply with his demands. The victim suffered no physical injuries. Thirty-two years later the victim began to remember the incident.

FIFTH VICTIM

In an attempt to cope with her nephew's murder, her mother's impending death, as well as problems with her marriage, "Nicole" sought out professional help. As opposed to helping her, however, her therapist used his position to take advantage of her situation. Over the months that followed, the victim was repeatedly sexually assaulted. During the assaults he would tell her to take pleasure in all of her pain. Once when she asked why he had assaulted her, he responded: "Because I’m a man. It
didn't hurt you." Furthermore, he convinced her that, if she ever told anyone, he would make sure she was put into a "mental hospital" for the rest of her life. The assaults ended only after her husband, fearing she was getting worse, decided to watch outside the therapist's window during one of his wife's sessions. The victim suffered no physical injuries.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter served to familiarize readers with the participants involved in the current study. This chapter provided both the demographical information of the couples, as well as, a descriptive account of the sexual assault incidents. Having presented an overview of the data, the next chapter attempts to analyse the data's contents utilizing the procedures previously outlined in Chapter 3. Within this analysis, material will also be drawn from each of the other chapters for the purposes of comparison and clarification.
DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of analyzing the data, this chapter has been divided into three sections. Each of these sections represents a stage in the post-assault marriage relationship and are labelled as follows: "Stage One: The Actor's Covert Reactions;" "Stage Two: The Actor's Initial Overt Reactions;" and "Stage Three: The Actor's Secondary Overt Reactions." Within each stage, the actor represents the voices of first the husbands, and then the wives.

STAGE ONE: THE ACTOR'S COVERT REACTIONS

Within this section, the researcher seeks first to examine the actor's interpretation of the pre-assault marital relationship. By comparing the husband's interpretation with that of his wife's, the researcher can acquire a better idea of how close each couple really was. In addition, the researcher will be better able to judge how much of a significant other each husband was to his wife.

THE HUSBAND'S INTERPRETATION OF THE PRE-ASSAULT MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

Out of the five men for whom sufficient data existed, memories of their pre-assault marital relationships ranged from "very good" to "very bad." Husbands who held fond memories (n=3) attributed the success of their relationships to two factors: Having maintained a certain amount of
independence from their spouses; and having developed a close friendship with them. For example, one husband had this to say:

Greg: We had good times. Sandie was independant and so was I. She had her group of friends, I had my group of friends ... so we always had things to share. We were close.

In contrast, two husbands remembered their pre-assault relationships as being problematic. However, whereas one husband accepted partial responsibility for this due to his alcoholism, the other husband seemed to attribute this to his wife's instability. Both husbands responded as follows:

"John:" It wasn't that great. I'm an alcoholic and when I married "Edna" I was an active alcoholic. I didn't become what you call a non-practicing alcoholic until about six years ago when I joined A.A. So I think the relationship was pretty bad, actually, right from day one. And I think that was mainly because of misperceptions. Well, you know, alcoholic thinking screws you up completely. And I think ... it was bad also because of what she brought into the marriage - her side, and that was this (the sexual assault) ... and when I came on the scene, there were these other visible incidents that had taken place, and one that was taking place actually when I encountered her ... Well, I think it led me to suppose she needed a protector, which is partly the case, I suspect, in any relationship ... but in this case it was overwhelming. It was almost the exclusive character of the relationship when I look back on it.

"Fred:" We had problems like everybody else does, but ours was a little bit different because "Nicole" has been seeing a therapist for the last 20 years. First a psychiatrist, then a therapist. She saw a psychiatrist for about 10 years but then his charges were just going higher and higher. A psychiatrist charges $150.00 an hour and a therapist only charges $50.00 an hour ... Now you figure that out and she
went twice a week to see a psychiatrist at $150.00 a crack for 21 years. That's an awful lot of money ... I've been paying. It is so bad on the husband that you just wouldn't believe it. You think it's bad on the woman. I had two kids at that time and we went through an awful lot because my wife was away from the house for a long time.

**THE WIFE'S INTERPRETATION OF THE PRE-ASSAULT MARITAL RELATIONSHIP**

Out of the five women interviewed, interpretations of their pre-assault relationships also ranged from "very good" to "very bad." However, although each woman's interpretation matched that of her husband's, she provided different reasons for the relationship's success or failure.

**Husbands Who Were "Very" Significant**

Wives who favorably labelled their relationships (n=3) attributed its success to such factors as good communication, respect for one another's independence, common interests and having developed a close friendship with their husbands. For example, one woman described her pre-assault relationship as follows:

"Marg:" Well, it was very happy-go-lucky and loving. We could talk then too. We had no problem communicating. We enjoyed each other's company and we liked doing the same things. I was really easy going ... I didn't even mind "Brian's" smoking and drugs.

It was clear that each of these three women had considered her husband to be a "very" significant other in her
life. However, as opposed to having acquired their significance via the more traditional types of male power (coercive, legitimate, expert), these husbands appeared to have acquired their "significance" via "referent power."

According to Doyle (1983:263):

Referent power is possessed by people who are admired or liked by others. Most people imitate to some degree or another the behaviors of people they admire. Consequently, the admired person either knowingly or unknowingly has some power over his or her admirers.

As such, each of these husbands possessed a certain amount of influence over their wives simply because they were well liked and respected.

Husbands Who Were "Less" Significant

Two wives who labelled their pre-assault marital relationships unfavorably listed such reasons as poor communication, the husband not being supportive enough, and the husband's lack of respect for her wishes (sexually and otherwise). Subsequently, in comparison to their husbands, these women placed the majority of their marital problems on them. For example, one woman had this to say:

"Edna:" Recently, "John" told me that he only married me for sex. He didn't love me ... (She stated that she had loved him, however). When I married him, I was hoping that I would be initiated into good sexuality ... Once he had intercourse with me annually and I was deeply hurt ... My husband is an alcoholic and there were many times when he ... we had sex, and of course, he must have been completely
drunk or I was blind. And I always felt that, many times in our sexual relationship, he raped me ... (But) he has always turned around and blamed this dysfunction in the sexuality totally on me, and I get very mad when it’s blamed totally on me.

In both of these cases, it appeared that the woman’s husband had acquired his significance to her via more traditional types of power, especially the coercive type. However, as Doyle (1983:262) points out, this type of power can also wreck havoc on a woman’s feelings towards her husband:

The relationship between the influencer and influencee will be filled with distrust and either open or hidden conflict. Furthermore, the victim of coercive power will in most instances come to dislike if not despise the coercive person. Often a person subjected to another’s coercive control will leave the relationship when the opportunity presents itself. The fact of the matter is that coercive power does not make for a lasting and caring relationship.\textsuperscript{100}

As a result, it is likely that each of these two women viewed their husbands to be less of a significant other than the previous women, and thus, less likely to be of influence.

Having completed an examination of the actor’s interpretation of the pre-assault relationship, the following seeks to compare the husband’s definition of the situation with that of his wife’s.

\textsuperscript{100}In fact, each woman had mentioned she had either thought about or threatened to leave the relationship prior to the sexual assault (or memory thereof).
THE HUSBAND'S INTERPRETATION OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULT

For the purpose of this study, the definition of the situation is the actor's interpretation of the sexual assault. Incorporated within this interpretation are two fundamental issues: Who the actor sees as the victim/s; and who the actor considers responsible. On these issues, there were also five husbands for whom sufficient data existed.

The Primary Victim

Each of the five husbands agreed that his wife had been the primary victim of the sexual assaults.\footnote{It is interesting to note that, when the women were asked to comment on how their husbands would answer this question, their responses directly matched those of their husbands'}. As such, these men tended to focus more on their wives' pains and suffering, a finding inconsistent with that of the Holmstrom and Burgess (1979) study. For example, one husband had this to say:

"John:" ... its just been a block to her development - to her growth - and not just in the area of sexual relations. Its just been something that has held her back in life. It has held her back in life completely. "Edna" is an extremely talented woman, extremely intelligent, and was perfectly capable of developing, in my view, a professional life that would have carried her far beyond than where she is. And I think this incident, certainly in large measure, has kept her from venturing out, as it were.

Secondary Victims

Although each of the husbands viewed himself as the
secondary victim, some also felt that other family members had suffered (their children, her parents) (n=3) and one felt that his entire community had suffered:

Greg: This incident that happened to Sandie is probably one of the worst things that has happened in this community. It scared a lot of people. People who thought it was safe on the streets, it opened their eyes. You can see it on the streets now with the girls. They'll look at you strangely - like distrust.

When asked why they viewed themselves as victims, responses ranged from the ability to feel the woman’s pain to feeling that they had to "undo" all the damage. Two husbands replied as follows:

"Kevin:" I don’t know if you’ll understand. It’s weird, but I can feel what "Leslie’s" feeling - her pain. It’s very emotional. It’s got to be the worst feeling in the world. It’s very strong.\[102\]

Greg: I was put in this situation through no fault of my own or my wife’s. He did this with no respect for Sandie or myself. Now I have to deal with it. I’ve got to pick up all the pieces and try to put them back together again - what he made a jumble of.

**Whom the Husbands Held Responsible**

Although four husbands held the accoster/s totally responsible for the assaults, one also held himself and his

\[102\] This husband admitted he had also been a sexual assault victim (not incest). This would explain why he was able to role take with his wife so well.

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wife partially to blame:\textsuperscript{103}

"Fred:"

I blame myself - maybe I should have done this right or been with the kids more, and I guess that's why I blame myself. I didn't do something correctly. That's why she's seeing therapists ... In a way, I want to blame her, but in another way I'm saying 'no!' because I know she was forced - 99 percent was the therapists fault.

In holding the accoster/s responsible, husbands' feelings ranged from "no feeling" (n=1)\textsuperscript{104} to utter contempt (n=4) for their wives' accoster/s. Those who felt contempt were morally outraged at both the senselessness of the attacks, and the possibility that the attacker/s would "get away with it."

Three of these husbands also admitted to feelings of revenge:

"Kevin:"

Oh I'd like to kill them. There is no doubt in my mind ... To me, that is the lowest thing anybody could ever do. I have more respect for a person that is a murderer than a rapist.

Greg:

At the time, I absolutely hated him. If I was given the chance, I could have pushed the button and killed him. Accidents, where someone dies or something, I can understand that, but this was vicious, with no reason.

"Fred:"

I wanted to rip him apart ... I think it's so pathetic because a therapist is supposed to be a person you trust. If you can't trust them, who can you?

\textsuperscript{103}Again, each of the wives' answers accurately described how their husbands would answer this question.

\textsuperscript{104}In this case, only the information provided from the non-participant’s wife was available. She commented that he felt little to no emotion towards her accosters. She believed the reason for this was the fact that he had also been sexually assaulted when he was young. Hence, to him, she was just another person that got a bad break in life.
Primary and Secondary Victims

In each case it was clear that the woman considered herself to be the primary victim of the assault. Presumably, the reason for this was because each woman had also been the direct victim of the assault.

In addition to themselves, four women considered their husbands to be the victims and, out of these four, three listed other family members (their children and/or her parents). The reason frequently given for these choices was that husbands and family members had to "pick up the pieces." It is interesting to note that one of these women also felt sorry for her accoster's family:

"Nicole:" His daughter was at the preliminary trial. I think she was probably really hurt too because she's probably wondering if her father really did this or not. So a lot of people have been hurt, and it's a shame.

Whom the Wives Held Responsible

Each woman held her accoster's primarily and directly responsible. However, whereas the majority of these women (n=4) appeared to harbour only contempt for their accosters, one woman admitted to feeling sorry for her's:

"Nicole:" I'm the only one that feels sorry for him because I think that if he's done this before, which I think he has, I think he has an illness, himself. He has a mental illness and he should be getting psychiatric help. Just as I had a mental breakdown,
I know that when a person has a problem they need help ... he needs to be helped so he'll stop.

In addition to holding their accoster/s responsible, two women appeared to hold themselves partially responsible. The reason for this was because both of these women had been the victims of "confidence rapes." As a result, these women seemed to blame themselves for not having "known better." One woman had this to say:

"Edna:" He half seduced me with his claim to knowledge about the carvings and I half seduced myself by wanting to talk to this man so much - to learn from him ... I enjoyed the element of danger of talking to the man and of being where I wasn't supposed to be.

One other woman held eye-witnesses and society, indirectly, responsible for her sexual assault. In this woman's case, although three people had witnessed her being kidnapped, not one had tried to help her or even call the police:

Sandie: ...the three people that witnessed what happened to me? - they didn't get involved. So he could have possibly killed me right then and there in the parking lot and they wouldn't have done anything. I'm angry that this one fellow just thought it was a marital quarrel and chose to get in his car and drive away. Like, obviously, what kind of upbringing did he have? Does he think that that's the way women are supposed to be treated? ... It's a never-ending chain and family violence is on the rise ... and then you get people to do what they did to me.

Having described the actor's covert reactions, the next stage attempts to describe the actor's overt reactions. As
will soon become apparent, each actor’s covert and overt reactions were closely related. That is, how the actor defined the situation in his or her own mind seemed to dictate how the actor outwardly reacted.

STAGE TWO: THE ACTOR’S INITIAL OVERT REACTIONS

Based on the actor’s definition of the situation, this section articulates the verbal and behavioral reactions of the actor, both to the sexual assault and his or her significant other.

THE HUSBAND’S VERBAL AND BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS

For two of the three husbands who had responded in anger and fantasized about revenge, the majority of their feelings remained at the covert level. Having defined the situation as one in which their wives needed them to be strong and supportive (not spending all their time plotting revenge, feeling hurt, anger or self-pity), these husbands made every attempt to set their own feelings aside in order to help their wives recover. In other words, both of these husbands showed clear signs of "ego involvement." By attempting to hide their feelings and emotions, these husbands expected to be viewed by their wives as strong and supportive.

In their attempts to supply their wives with both

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105 In fact, each of their wives commented on how hard their husbands had tried in this regards. One woman added that she found her husband’s attitude very special.
emotional and physical support, these husbands educated themselves on sexual assault, encouraged their wives to have counselling\textsuperscript{106} and take legal action, and took positive steps towards dealing with the woman's new phobias:

Greg: I used to work three shifts - not any more. I call home regularly now when I'm at work to make sure Sandie is o.k. If I take Sandie to a mall and see someone approaching her, I'll step in front of her. I have to plan things out a lot more carefully now. We go to a function, and if I want to go to the washroom, I have to make sure there is somebody at the table with her while I go. She won't go out at night, do shopping, or whatever, unless she's accompanied by myself or somebody like a close friend. We've put in burglar alarms and got a dog. She carries a personal alarm around with her now... I had a lot of readjustments to make, like how to react to her reactions and moods.

"Kevin:" We stay up sometimes anywhere from 11:00 in the evening to 4:00 in the morning. It doesn't bother me if I have to work or do anything the next morning either. My first priority is trying to help her with her problem ... it's not her problem, it's our problem ... She doesn't let people into the house she doesn't know anymore. I tell her not too. Especially when she's alone, she always locks the door. "Leslie" is more comfortable with the dog now too.

The other husband, however, was unable to overcome his feelings of anger and revenge.\textsuperscript{107} Having witnessed his wife's assault, one that was not brutal, this husband was having

\textsuperscript{106}Both Greg and "Kevin" also sought counselling for themselves, however, each implied that the help he received had been only minimal.

\textsuperscript{107}This husband admitted to twice having confronted the accosters. It is interesting to note, however, that both times the accosters had convinced him nothing had happened. As a result of these confrontations, this husband described feeling even angrier.
difficulty separating the sexual nature of the act from its more violent nature. As a result, he could not entirely overcome his feelings of betrayal. According to his wife:

"Nicole:" Sometimes it seems like he’s always comparing himself to (accoster). Comparing to what (accoster) was and who he was. He compares himself to him so that it makes him feel like less of a person ... He told the police department that all he wants is five minutes in a room with him ... he threatened to shoot me.

Despite his feelings of betrayal, however, "Fred" made attempts to support his wife in other ways. It is likely that his decision to try and support his wife was a result of "Fred" also holding himself partially to blame. His support took the form of encouraging his wife to seek counselling and encouraging her to seek legal remedies. In addition, "Fred" sought out counselling for himself.\(^{108}\)

In contrast, although one other husband had also responded in anger towards the assault situation, his reaction continued to remain at the covert level. Since this husband had been a "wet" alcoholic at the time, he was unable to deal properly with his wife’s assault. He coped with the situation by remaining drunk. By remaining drunk, however, he not only avoided dealing with his own emotions, he convinced his wife he was devoid of them, even towards her:

\(^{108}\)In this case, although "Fred" stated that the counselling he received had been working, he could not always find the time to go. Hence, "Fred" did not take full advantage of this service.
"Edna:"

He felt no anger towards the man. That never came out. In a sense, he hasn’t really shown much emotion about the whole thing. I mean, I think if a man loved his wife and his wife told him that this happened, he might show anger towards the man.

Hence, although this husband did not intentionally, or meaningfully, communicate his disinterest to his wife, his unemotional reaction appeared to symbolize disinterest to her. It is the researcher’s opinion that this had also been the case with the non-participating male. ¹⁰⁹

THE WIFE’S VERBAL AND BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS

The initial female reactions noted in this study closely resembled those documented in previous studies (Katz and Burt, 1988; Katz, 1984; McCahill, Meyer and Fischman, 1979; and Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974). However, while those studies had drawn distinctions in time between victims’ reactions, due to the retrospective nature of the current study, this researcher had been unable to do so.

General Reactions

As previously noted by Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) and McCahill, Meyer and Fischman (1979), victims commonly experienced the following reactions: Soreness (n=5), shock

¹⁰⁹ It is the researcher’s opinion that this husband had been covering up his pain and anger with only a facade of “no emotion.” He could not deal with his wife’s sexual assault because he had not dealt with his own sexual assault (incest). As opposed to coping with these problems using alcohol, however, this husband coped by taking more potent and heavier doses of drugs.
(n=3), disbelief (n=5), anger (n=5), helplessness (n=3), disturbed sleep patterns (n=4), increased motor activity (n=4),"10 fear (n=5) and depression (n=3).

In only one instance did a woman's depression become so deep that she began entertaining thoughts of suicide. In this woman's case, death had symbolized not only an escape from dealing with the assault, but from dealing with her husband:

"Nicole:" I went to my sister's and I got up the next morning and all I kept thinking about was death. The only way I could get out was to die.

Considering the severe extent of this woman's self-blame,"11 this finding was not unusual. As pointed out earlier, suicidal tendencies increase according to the amount of blame internalized (Katz and Burt, 1988:166).

Although not previously documented by researchers, increased aggression was also a frequently reported reaction (n=3). Each woman seemed to imply that her aggressive behavior was an attempt to regain back control of her life. Ironically, however, one woman admitted that her aggressive behavior had gotten out of control more than once:

"Marg:" It's just an incredible feeling that builds up

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10 Increased motor activity varied in each woman's case. For example, whereas two women stayed temporarily at a relative's house, one woman moved to a different city and one woman moved to a different country.

11 Not only had this woman been the victim of a "confidence rape," thus blaming herself, but her husband, struggling with his thoughts that she may have betrayed him, had also blamed her.
inside and I feel like I'm going to explode ... I'm becoming violent and it's awful ... One time I drove him (husband) in the back of the head as hard as I could and I layed him out - again, and then, as soon as I did it I said: "Oh my God. I'm sorry." I don't know what happened ... and I mean, it's stupid. Of all the horrible things to start doing. I'm just petrified.

**Specific Fear-Related Reactions**

With respect to fear, the results of this study supported those of Burgess' and Holmstrom's (1974) and McCahill's, Meyer's and Fischman's (1979). That is, victims' reactions were specific to the circumstances surrounding their assaults. For example, one woman developed a fear of water as a result of being attacked above the ocean:

"Edna:" It has always surfaced when I've been near water, or jumping into water ... I hate water. I had to force myself to learn how to swim and I did only a few years ago. I still will not go into the deep end of the water or jump in.

Another woman developed an abhorrence to the smell of marihuana after remembering her accosters had used the drug during her assault. This reaction, in particular, created problems between her and her husband because he often smoked marihuana with his friends:

"Marg:" ...most of the time they go outside and they smoke drugs and they come in and they are stoned. It just enrages me ... But, you see, from what I can recall, they (accosters) were smoking drugs while I was being assaulted ... just the smell of marajuana makes me cringe.
Although some victims reported other related fears, such as a fear of contacting aids (n=1), a fear of the dark (n=1) and a fear of being alone (n=3), every victim reported experiencing a fear of intimacy and a fear and distrust of people (especially men). Regarding both of these fears, two participants commented as follows:

"Leslie:" It took about a year to a year and a half before I could be with him, but I would be like a corpse almost. I couldn’t get into it.

Greg: Sandie was a very friendly, outgoing person before the assault. Now she’s very cautious. She’s not very trusting ... She’ll see someone with shifty eyes, or whatever, and she could create a story about that person in her mind that she believes ... Somebody will be sitting outside a shopping mall and she gets all tensed up. If somebody happens to brush her in a mall, she gets nervous.

What appeared to accompany these victims’ fear and distrust of people were two other concerns: A fear of being assaulted again, and a fear of being ridiculed or blamed for the assault. As a result of this later fear, out of the four women who could have involved the police, two refused to press charges:112

"Marg:" When I worked at the crisis centre, I convinced this poor girl to press charges. I went to court with her. At the end of it I knew it was a mistake because the guy got six months and she went through

112Sandie and "Nicole" were the only women who chose to utilize the criminal justice system. It is interesting to note that both of these women were the only victims who had also sought counselling. It may be that, because their sexual assaults had already been brought out into the open, these women felt fewer inhibitions about talking about their assaults.
absolute torment ... it was just horrible. She was the one on trial. They were accusing her of leading him on, dredging up her sexual past, and of fabricating the whole story ... so no way!

"Kevin:

"Leslie" doesn’t want all her friends knowing. Hardly anyone knows about this. But, if she goes to court everybody’s going to know about it and that’s what she’s scared of ... If anybody knows about it, even though I know it’s very hard for her, if they don’t like it, if they think she’s any less of a person, then I think that means they are even less of a person themselves because it takes a lot of courage for someone to come out and be open with that. She’s waiting for the time. If it takes another five years, it takes another five years.

The fact that victims feared being ridiculed or blamed may also account for why three women had difficulties relating their assaults to their husbands. For example, it took one woman a whole year before she could relate her entire sexual assault experience. It seemed that, in their minds, because they had lost so much already, they did not want to run the additional risk of losing their spouses:

Sandie: He (accoster) took half of me that day. That half of me is gone forever. But he wasn’t going to take my husband away and we’re still together. It’s so easy to give up.

In other words, having defined their situations as ones in which they could potentially lose their husbands, these women began experiencing "ego involvement." As such, they attempted to either hide certain details of their assaults or provide these details in piecemeal fashion.

As a result of experiencing a combination of both general reactions and specific fear-related reactions, each woman in
this study also implied experiencing a certain degree of "role strain." For example, feelings of stress accompanied fulfilling their roles as wives in the sexual sense and in the traditional sense (shopping, cooking, cleaning). Other roles that had been affected included career roles (n=4), student roles (n=1) and parent roles (1).

In addition to role strain, one woman implied experiencing "role distance." In this woman's case, she no longer wanted to fulfill the traditional obligations of the wife, especially in the kitchen:

"Marg:" Now it's like, "Well, you know how to use the stove. You're not my son. I shouldn't have to take care of you." Now it's just this horrible attitude of "You take care of yourself." I was a lot nicer before-hand.

**Flashbacks**

In support of Katz' (1984) account, four of the five women in this study reported experiences with flashbacks. One woman admitted to having them as often as once a month. However, other than comparing a flashback with being in a hollow tunnel, not one of the victims could describe what it was like to actually have one. For this reason, the researcher decided to include a detailed account of a flashback from an outside source, Susan Shannon James.\(^{13}\)

\(^{13}\)The researcher first met Susan at the University of Windsor. Although Susan had originally intended to be a participant, the characteristics of her sexual assault had not fit the necessary requirements of the study.
Susan had been the victim of a combined kidnapping and sexual assault. The flashbacks from her experience were so frequent that she decided to write about them:

The pain feels like the SSSS a branding iron makes as it chars the skin. SSSSSSSSS; I writhe and scream implosively. The edge of a memory pierces my mind. I am wounded, my injuries internal, no one sees I am bleeding.

I am riding in the car with my husband. As we exit the expressway onto a two lane highway I begin to feel odd. I am, at first, uncomfortable. I fidget. I wiggle about in the car seat. I open the window for just a little more air. I feel agitated with my clothing. I remove my coat. Aware that I am experiencing a trapped feeling, I peer outside with greater intent. I want to scream, but if I scream, I am frightened I will not be able to stop.

I long to tell Thomas there is something terribly wrong. I fear turning my eyes toward him. There is a foreboding suggestion in my mind that he will not look the same to me. I attempt to control my rapid shallow breaths. Trepidation sets in.

Thomas questions what is wrong, but words are difficult to speak. I want to jump from this car. I roll the window completely down. I cannot diffuse the onslaught of fears and feelings. I lean against the door. I stare at the door’s handle. I am going to jump from this car.

You see, for a time this is my reality. What I feel inside myself as occurring is not actually happening. This is a flashback. I have had flashbacks before. The difference, this time, is that I am keenly aware of what is taking place. Logically, I know the fear is unjustified. Therapy has enlightened me, but knowledge does not counteract the dreadful sensations.

The reality is you shut off the alarm and you drift back into a sleep. It is that early morning dream that seems so real in which you believe you are awake and preparing to dress for work. It is a state of disorientation you experience when you fall asleep in the afternoon; to awake in confusion if it is the night of the same day or the morning of
the next. The truth is, a flashback is not a dream. It is not a moment of deja vu. But this is the closest I can bring you to understanding the metamorphosis that occurs when the past overtakes the present. (Susan Shannon James, 1992)

Having described the actor's initial overt reactions, the next stage attempts to describe the actor's secondary overt reactions.

**STAGE THREE: THE ACTOR'S SECONDARY OVERT REACTIONS**

Within this stage, the researcher looks at the negative repercussions from the actor's initial overt reactions and whether, as a result, the actor appeared to modify his or her definition of the situation. At the conclusion of this section, the researcher looks at how the overall reactions of each husband affected his partner's recovery from her assault.

**REPERCUSSIONS OF THE HUSBAND'S INITIAL OVERT REACTIONS**

There were five men for whom sufficient data was available here. Out of these men, four experienced negative repercussions from their initial overt reactions.

In one case, the husband's inability to talk about his wife's sexual assault, along with his subsequent increase in drug abuse, drove a rift in his marital relationship. Moreover, when problems in the marital relationship became so severe that his wife asked to end the relationship, this man
implied that it was he who had become the primary victim.\textsuperscript{114}

Hence, in this instance, his definition of the situation had become modified as a result of negative repercussions.

In another case, the husband insisted that attempts to seek justice through the criminal justice system had only exacerbated the problems in his marital relationship:

"Fred:" I'm tired of the system. It's been postponed now I don't know how many times. If we had to start all over we would not be going through this. That's all I think about 95 percent of the time. How long is that going to take - One year? Two years? Three years? Four years? They don't know and they want us to hang on to this. We can't help dwelling on it. We wake up and we think about it.

In addition to creating greater problems in his marriage, however, this husband implied that the court process had had negative repercussions on his own self image:

"Fred:" I don't care if I'm working or not ... What bugs me is that he's still practicing .... I thought I was a strong person - I was a very strong person before this occurred. I thought I could handle this and you see what it did to me? Well, I see it ... Do you know what keeps me together? I go to church - by myself. That's what's keeping me alive - from commiting suicide ... I just want to put this behind us and get back to doing what I'm supposed to be doing - working.\textsuperscript{115}

As a result of both of these repercussions, this husband's definition of the situation also appeared to become

\textsuperscript{114}This information is based on his wife's interpretation.

\textsuperscript{115}As a result of the court trial draining this man's energies, it is clear that he also experienced "role distance" in relation to his career obligations.
somewhat modified. That is, in "Fred's" mind, his victim status had become stronger.

As a result of his alcoholism and perceived disinterest in his wife, another husband also experienced greater problems in his marital relationship. Shortly following this occurrence, however, his drinking reached a point where he was forced to seek out professional help. Once he got his alcoholism under control, he was then able to take a closer look at his marriage and a more sympathetic look at his wife's experience:

"John:" ... after I had about three years of sobriety under my belt, I started to look at the relationship with my wife, and I started to look at the horror of it and I thought: "My God! Look what I've done. I'm not even friends with this woman"... and so then I started to piece things together, and I started to see the pivotal role played by this incident of the stranger assault ... and its only now that I'm starting to come to terms with that and to experience other feelings about this, that this is something, a situation, in which I should be part of the therapeutic process ... certainly I am more sympathetic about this.

Hence, although "John's" alcoholism and perceived disinterest had had negative repercussions on his marriage initially, he attempted to temper their effects in his sobriety. Moreover, as a result of his sobriety, his definition of the situation had also become modified. Whereas before he would blame his wife for her fear of intimacy, he now sees her fear as a sole result of her sexual assault.

In another husband's case, his attempts to aid his wife's
recovery began to negatively impact on not only his marriage, but on his view of her. Both he and his wife comment in the following:

Greg: It's still frustrating at times. I felt very lonely. I was dealing always with the concerns of my wife, I guess I was feeling sorry for myself. I didn't have time to deal with emotional problems. I was always taking care of my wife, or trying too. It becomes very old after a while. I'm not talking two weeks or three weeks, we're talking three years and I'm still trying to help my wife ... I don't want to use the word "burden," but basically, I spend so much time at home with my wife, our talk becomes stagnant. I don't get a chance to go out and do things of interest to me.

Sandie: Sometimes I feel a lot of anger from him and bitterness because of the situation where I'm at home and I don't want to do as many things as I used to or go as many places as I used to ... Sometimes he says he feels like a babysitter.

Hence, although Greg voluntarily took on the role of his wife's protector initially, he gradually began to experience role strain within this capacity. In addition, it is likely that his definition of the situation was modified. That is, while his view of himself as victim had grown stronger, his view of his wife as victim had grown weaker.

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE WIFE'S INITIAL OVERT REACTIONS

Without exception, each woman implied that her initial overt reactions had had negative repercussions on her marital relationship. However, the extent of these repercussions differed in each woman's case.

In both cases in which the pre-assault marital
relationship had been problematic, the wife stated that the additional stress had only exacerbated the problems. However, whereas one woman implied that her marriage was close to dissolving, the other woman reported that her marriage had been salvaged. Both women comment in the following:

"Nicole:" "Fred" has lost all self-confidence and I have too, but I’m working on improving myself because I have to. It’s a matter of survival if I want to live and not get depressed that I commit suicide. I have to keep fighting. I either fight or I give up. Him - he works but he doesn’t work as much as he used to. He doesn’t have any enthusiasm in it. He’s gone down. There are days he’s so bad that I don’t know how we’re going on ... I don’t know if there is anything left ... If "Fred" can ever forgive me, then maybe we can save our marriage. If he can’t, then it’s over ...

"Edna:" ... any emotion or love I’ve had for him has slowly died, and I told him: "We’ll stay together because we have a child to raise, and all I want, the bottom line is, let us, at least, respect each other and be civil to each other for our son’s sake ... I believe actually that our marriage is on a totally different plane, and I’ll still say that it’s a marriage - it’s our marriage. We both agreed that part of the marital relationship is also the parental one.

Hence, although each woman’s definition of the situation had been modified, in only one instance had it been for the better. That is, whereas "Nicole’s victim status had become stronger, "Edna’s" victim status had become weaker.

In each of the three cases in which the pre-sexual assault relationship had been good, the wife also stated that her initial reactions had created problems in the relationship. However, whereas one woman implied that her
reactions had resulted in only minor marital problems,\textsuperscript{116} the other two women stated that their reactions had nearly led to the breakdown of their marriages (in "Marg’s" case it recently did). Both of these women commented as follows:

Sandie: The first year was really touch and go because if anybody ever needed an excuse to split up, we had the number one excuse. He (accoster) had taken so much away from both Greg and I ... Well, my daughter I lost last year. That was really difficult too. She was stillborn. We found out that, throughout the court process, I was on anti-depressants, and when I found out I was pregnant I quit taking it. But apparently, the coroner put down the cause of death - "prozac" (the drug) and that was another whammy.

"Marg:" ... it’s just that he feels rejected and he’ll get angry and say things. One time he was really upset because I wouldn’t let him come near me, and I’d freeze up, and he made some kind of comment about me being frigid. I didn’t like that at all. I just told him he had until March 1992. I don’t want him to carry the blame for the relationship at all. I carry my share, which is at least half, maybe even more so because I need so much and he can give me so little. If I didn’t need so much, then we’d probably get along just fine. I’d say 80 percent of our problems are a direct result of the assault. My biggest problem is that I don’t want to be forced to do anything.

In addition to women’s reactions having negative repercussions on their marital relationships, they had negative repercussions on their self concepts. In other words, the status of "assault victim" impacted so heavily on each woman’s life that it affected how they saw their

\textsuperscript{116}As stated earlier, Leslie’s husband had also been a sexual assault victim and had learned to cope with his experience. As a result, he was very understanding and helpful to her.
"selves." Three women commented as follows:

"Leslie:" ...it's something that will always be there, no matter how much you want or wish it would go away, or hope that it will go away, or not understand why it happened to you. It is something that will always be there. It's kind of lingering around no matter what mood you're in ... you still know it happened.

"Marg:" ...I keep having these reactions that I don't like and I don't know how to get rid of them. I don't know how to stop them. How do you just stop sneezing or blinking, for that matter? That's just exactly what it is, and how do you stop it? I haven't a clue.

Sandie: It will never be the same because I don't think you are totally without guard. I think some things will always be there to haunt you. You try not to show it but it's still there.

**IMPACT OF THE HUSBAND'S OVERALL REACTIONS ON THE WOMAN'S RECOVERY**

Without exception, the victim's recovery had been affected by her husband's overall reactions. Each victim's account is presented in the following.

"Leslie:

Although Leslie continues to show some reactions to her sexual assault (nightmares, flashbacks, fear of people, and fear of ridicule) both her and her husband reported that she is recovering well. However, they both agreed that her recovery would have been even faster had she first received proper counselling. Having responded positively to her assault, her husband has been, and continues to be, a big factor in her recovery. It is likely that his success in this regards can be attributed to his having dealt so successfully with his own sexual assault. Moreover, through his support and understanding, their marriage has continued to remain strong and, in some ways, has even been
strengthened.

"Marg:"

"Marg’s" reactions to the assault continue to be strong. She is particularly concerned about her increasing violent behavior and over-protective attitude towards her daughter. In many ways, her recovery has been hindered by her husband’s reactions. Not only was he unable to talk with her about the sexual assault, he continued to smoke the drug that reminded her so strongly of her assault. However, his lack of support can likely be attributed to his having dealt so unsuccessfully with his own sexual assault. Furthermore, as a result of their marital breakdown, "Marg" has had the additional stress of having to cope with the loss of her husband.

Sandie:

Although Sandie continues to react to her sexual assault experience (fear of being alone, fear of people and flashbacks), both she and her husband stated that she is recovering well. Although her husband eventually began to resent his protective role, his initial positive reactions greatly facilitated Sandie’s recovery (he added, however, that his secondary reactions could have been avoided had proper counselling been available for him). Through his encouragement and support, she not only sought helpful counselling, but she dealt successfully with the criminal justice system. Moreover, both added that, at least in some ways, their marriage had been strengthened.

"Edna:"

"Edna’s" recovery from her sexual assault has been particularly problematic. Not only had she been an incest victim prior to her stranger sexual assault, but her husband appeared to exacerbate her reactions (particularly her fear of intimacy) through his alcoholic behavior (unsupportive, blamed her for her dislike of sex, and, in her mind, sexually assaulted her himself). However, once her husband had dealt with his alcoholism, not only did he become more supportive and understanding, but their marriage also became more stable. Moreover, "Edna" and her husband have begun receiving marital counselling and, within these sessions, dealing with her sexual
assault together.

"Nicole:"

Although "Nicole" has made progress in her recovery (she no longer dwells on suicide), her reactions to the assault continue to be numerous and strong (anger, blame, depression and fear of people). Her personal problems before the assaults, coupled with the fact that her husband partially blamed her, have greatly hindered her recovery. There is little doubt that the criminal trial has also taken its toll on both "Nicole" and her husband, as well as, on their marriage. On the more positive side, however, both "Nicole" and her husband have been receiving helpful counselling. If the couple can continue having counselling and can maintain their marriage, Nicole’s recovery is likely to further improve.

SUMMARY

This chapter was divided into three sections: "Stage One: The Actor’s Covert Reactions;" "Stage Two: The Actor’s Initial Overt Reactions;" and "Stage Three: The Actor’s Secondary Overt Reactions." Within the first stage the researcher examined and compared the husband’s and the wife’s interpretation of the pre-assault relationship, as well as, the husband’s and the wife’s interpretation of the sexual assault.

In the second stage, the researcher articulated and compared the husband’s and the wife’s verbal and behavioral reactions to the sexual assault and to his or her significant other.

Within the third stage, the researcher examined the negative repercussions from the husband’s and the wife’s
initial overt reactions and whether, as a result, he or she had appeared to modify his or her original definition of the situation. Within this stage, the researcher also looked at how, if at all, the husband’s overall reactions had affected his wife’s recovery from her sexual assault. The results of this investigation revealed that each of the husband’s overall reactions had, indeed, affected his wife’s recovery, both positively and negatively.
CONCLUSION

The subject of the husband's reactions to sexual assault as a factor in the woman's recovery has generated little interest in Canada. The researcher has attempted to change this situation by arguing that how a husband responds and interacts with his partner, following her sexual assault, can either facilitate or inhibit her recovery from it.

The specific question upon which this research rested was: To what extent do the husband's reactions to his wife being sexually assaulted, help or hinder her recovery from the assault. In order to answer this question, the primary goals within this study were: First, to discover what the marriage relationship was like prior to the sexual assault; second, to articulate both the husband's and the wife's verbal and behavioral reactions to the sexual assault (specifically, a stranger sexual assault) and to each other; and third, to discover how, if at all, the husband's reactions affected his partner's recovery from the assault.

Based on data obtained from five married couples, the researcher discovered that pre-assault relationships were perceived as good in three cases but problematic in two. As such, the researcher argued that, in those cases where the relationship had been good, the husband was likely "more" of a significant other to his wife than the other two husbands.

The husband's and the wife's verbal and behavioral reactions to the sexual assault were based on who the
individual viewed as the victim/s and who the individual blamed for the assault. In each case, the individual perceived the woman to be the primary victim and the man to be the secondary victim. In the majority of cases, individuals also perceived that the accoster was to blame for the assault. In only one case did the husband also blame himself and his wife for the sexual assault, and in only two cases did the woman also blame herself for the assault.

The results of this study revealed that the husband’s overall reactions had affected his partner’s recovery from her sexual assault. Whereas in three cases the husband had greatly hindered his wife’s recovery, in two cases the husband had greatly facilitated his wife’s recovery. For this reason, the researcher maintains that the husband’s reactions to his wife being sexually assaulted can greatly help or hinder her recovery.

On a final note, negative thinking and behavior towards sexual assault victims is socially contagious. Young people learn it in social interactions with others and it filters down from one generation to the next. For widespread change to occur, society itself must band together to encourage greater equality between men and women and promote a greater understanding of the true nature of sexual assault.

On a smaller scale, husbands of sexual assault victims should have counselling made available on how best to cope with the situation. Towards this aim, a new program in
Detroit, "The Significant Other's Group," has just recently begun educating husbands on the true nature of sexual assault and helping them learn how to cope with their wife's sexual assaults. It is the sincere hope of this researcher that such a program will soon be the goal for Canadian sexual assault centres. It is also the sincere hope of this researcher that more positive attitudes towards women will aid husbands to work conjointly with their wives in their recoveries. As Timothy Beneke (1982) one stated: "For a man to acknowledge and reject all the different ways he has learned to regard women as less than human is an act of courage and an act of love" (Beneke, 1982:33).
APPENDIX A

Examples of Newspaper Advertisements

PERSONAL

SUBJECTS ARE NEEDED FOR MASTERS THESIS.
Need to interview couples wherein the female is a victim of a stranger/acquaintance sexual assault. Anonymity guaranteed.

Interview will be conducted by a trained councillor. Just talking about it is therapeutic.

Please contact Karri at (705) 746-5262 Collect

SUBJECTS ARE NEEDED
For Masters thesis. Need to interview couples wherein the female is a victim of a stranger/acquaintance sexual assault. Anonymity guaranteed. Interview will be conducted by a trained counsellor. Just talking about it is therapeutic. Please contact KARRI, collect at (519) 253-4225.

SUBJECTS NEEDED for Masters Thesis
Need to interview couples wherein the female is a victim of a stranger/acquaintance sexual assault. Anonymity guaranteed.

Interview will be conducted by a trained counsellor. Just talking about it is therapeutic.

Please contact Karri
705-746-5262 (collect)

SUBJECTS ARE NEEDED FOR MASTER THESIS
Need to interview couples where the female is a victim of a stranger - acquaintance sexual assault. Anonymity is guaranteed. Interview will be conducted by a trained counsellor. Just talking about it is therapeutic.

Please contact Karri at
705-746-5262 Collect

"SUBJECTS" ARE STILL NEEDED!
FOR MASTERS THESIS.
Require interviews with couples where in the female is a victim of a "stranger" sexual assault. Anonymity is guaranteed. Interviews will be conducted by a trained counsellor. Just talking about it is often therapeutic. Please contact Karri at 253-4225 between 10pm. - 7pm., or leave message on answering machine.
Appendix B

Letter Sent to Crisis Centres

In accordance with our conversation last ______, I am writing to you in order to better explain my situation. I am currently working on my master's thesis in the area of sexual assault. My study is exploratory instead of statistical in nature, and looks at the aftermath of sexual assault that a couple faces when the woman has been victimized by a stranger.

In order to gain insight into this area, I have decided to interview couples that fit such a scenario. Unfortunately, it has been very difficult gaining access to couples such as these. So far, I have interviewed only one couple, and that was in Windsor, Ontario where I attend University.

My problem, therefore, is one of access. It is difficult to obtain interviews when people are not aware that such a study is even being conducted. It is for this reason that I am writing and asking for any assistance your agency may be able to provide. If you have any clients in mind that fit the criteria mentioned above, it would be greatly appreciated if you could notify them of what I am doing. In this way they, themselves, can make the choice whether or not to be interviewed for the study.

Due to my own background as a counsellor for battered women in Parry Sound at Esprit Place, and having taken the course in Sudbury to be an "on call assistant" to sexual assault victims, I am aware of your probable concern over issues of ethics and confidentiality. Let me assure you, however, that anonymity of all interviewees will be guaranteed, and as well, that questions focus only on the aftermath of the sexual assault between the couple, and not on the sexual assault itself. Moreover, I will be supplying participants with a consent form to sign that will allow them to withdraw from the study at any time.

Enclosed is a copy of the consent form I will be using and a copy of my thesis proposal (not including the questionnaires or the bibliography). Also enclosed is a detailed list of characteristics each couple must possess in order to meet the requirements of my thesis. I have included
these in a notice specifically designed for any couple you may have in mind or simply to be posted on your bulletin board.

Any help your organization can provide will be greatly appreciated. I can be contacted at _______. I will be following up this letter to you with a phone call within the next few weeks. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Karri Michaelis

* This letter is only a facsimile of the letters sent to crisis centres; original letters contained the same information, however, depending on the content of prior telephone conversations, some contained certain additional information.
Appendix C

Notice Used for Crisis Centres' Bulletin Boards

SUBJECTS NEEDED FOR GROUNDBREAKING STUDY
concerning how the male's response to sexual assault can affect the female's recovery.

This is a topic that has virtually been ignored by feminist writers who have chosen to focus only on the woman. However, any female who has survived a sexual assault by a man, other than her husband or boyfriend, knows that his response to the assault, and to her, has affected her recovery from it (one way or another). In fact, between 50-80% of relationships break down following the woman becoming a victim of a sexual assault.

Therefore, to know how men's past reactions have helped or hindered the women in their lives could prevent unnecessary hardships between similarly afflicted couples in the future. This is the aim of the present study.

The subjects needed for this research are couples who share the following commonalities:
... the woman has been sexually assaulted by someone unknown or only slightly known to her
... the sexual assault involved some type of intercourse
... the couple was either seeing each other at the time of the assault, or the woman remembers this type of
assault from her past, and she has suppressed the memory well into her relationship.

Also:
- Interviews will last approximately one hour with the females, and approximately half an hour with the males.
- All names will be coded in order to guarantee the anonymity of all participants.
- All interviews will be conducted by a trained counsellor.
- All interviews will be conducted at a place mutually safe and satisfactory to both interviewer and interviewee.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Karri by placing a collect call to Windsor, Ontario at 519-253-4225. If you reach the answering machine, please leave a name and number at which you can be contacted. Thank-you very much, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Karri Michaelis

(N.B. This research is being conducted in order to fulfill the requirements of an M.A. in Sociology/Criminology)
Appendix D

Research Instrument for Females

1. How old are you?
2. What is your occupation?
3. What is your ethnic background?
4. What religious denomination do you belong to?
5. Are you married to, living common-law with or dating the man in your life?
6. How long have you been in this relationship?
7. Do you have any children?
8. When were you sexually assaulted?
9. How many assaulted you?
10. Were any weapons used?
11. Did you sustain any physical injuries?
12. How much about your sexual assault experience is your husband/boyfriend aware of?
13. How have you changed since the assault (assault memory)?
14. What methods have you both employed to deal with these changes?
15. How are you doing in your recovery from the assault?
16. What was your relationship like prior to your husband/boyfriend learning that you were sexually assaulted?
17. What were your husband’s/boyfriend’s initial reactions upon learning you had been sexually assaulted?
18. Do you think that your husband/boyfriend feels somehow responsible for what happened to you? Do you agree?
19. How do you think your husband/boyfriend has been affected, overall, by the fact that you were sexually assaulted?
20. Do you think that your husband's/boyfriend's feelings towards you have changed, in any way, as a result of what has happened? How?

21. Do you think that your relationship has changed, in any way, as a result of what happened to you? How?

22. Who do you think that your husband/boyfriend sees as the victim(s) of the sexual assault? Do you agree?

23. How do you think your husband/boyfriend feels towards your accoster(s)?

24. Does (did) your position on any of the following differ from that of your husband's/boyfriend's?
   a) either you or he receiving counselling from support agencies?
   b) informing the police and possibly having charges laid?
   c) going through a court trial?

25. Do you feel that your husband/boyfriend has been supportive to you in your recovery from the sexual assault? How?

26. Has dealing with the aftermath of the assault brought you closer together or further apart?
Appendix E

Research Instrument for Males

1. How old are you?
2. What is your occupation?
3. What is your ethnic background?
4. What religious denomination do you belong to?
5. What was your relationship like with your wife/girlfriend prior to learning she was sexually assaulted?
6. What were your initial reactions upon learning that your wife/girlfriend had been sexually assaulted?
7. Do you feel somehow responsible for what happened to your wife/girlfriend?
8. How have you been affected, overall, by the fact that your wife/girlfriend was sexually assaulted?
9. How has your wife/girlfriend changed since the assault (assault memory)?
10. What methods have you both employed to deal with these changes?
11. Have your feelings towards your wife/girlfriend changed, in any way, as a result of what has happened? How?
12. Do you feel that your relationship has changed, in any way, as a result of what happened to her? How?
13. Who do you see as the victim(s) of the sexual assault?
14. How do you feel towards your wife’s/girlfriend’s accoster(s)?
15. What is (was) your position on each of the following?
   a) either you or your wife/girlfriend receiving counselling from support agencies?
   b) informing the police and possibly having charges laid?
c) going through a court trial?

16. How well is your wife/girlfriend doing in her recovery from the assault?

17. Do you feel that you have been supportive to your wife/girlfriend in her recovery from the sexual assault? How?

18. Has dealing with the aftermath of the assault brought you closer together or further apart?
Appendix F

Consent Form

I, ________________ have voluntarily consented to take part in this sociological study dealing with the aftermath of sexual assault by a stranger.

I understand that the information I give will be used for scientific purposes only, that is, in order to understand how each individual in a couple relationship is affected by the sexual assault, as well as, how the female is affected by the male response.

I further understand that my identification will remain confidential, and that I may refrain from answering any question asked of me.

_________________________  __________________________
Date                          Interviewee's Signature

_________________________  __________________________
Date                          Interviewer's Signature
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